GREAT SINGERS ON THE ART OF SINGING

JAMES FRANCIS COOKE

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GREAT SINGERS ON THE ART *of* SINGING

EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES WITH FOREMOST ARTISTS

BY
JAMES FRANCIS COOKE

A SERIES
OF PERSONAL STUDY TALKS WITH
THE MOST RENOWNED OPERA
CONCERT AND ORATORIO
SINGERS OF THE TIME

ESPECIALLY PLANNED FOR VOICE STUDENTS



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INTRODUCTION

Vocal Gold Mines and How They are Developed

Plutarch tells how a Laconian youth picked all the feathers from the scrawny body of a nightingale and when he saw what a tiny thing was left exclaimed,

"Surely thou art all voice
and nothing else!"

Among the tens of thousands of young men and women who, having heard a few famous singers, suddenly determine to follow the trail of the footlights, there must be a very great number who think that the success of the singer is "voice and nothing else." If this collection of conferences serves to indicate how much more goes into the development of the modern singer than mere voice, the effort will be fruitful.

Nothing is more fascinating in human relations than the medium of communication we call speech. When this is combined with beautiful music in song, its charm is supreme. The conferences collected in this book were secured during a period of from ten to fifteen years; and in every case the notes have been carefully, often microscopically, reviewed and approved by the artist. They are the record of actual accomplishment and not mere metempirical opinions. The general design was directed by the hundreds of questions that

had been presented to the writer in his own experience in teaching the art of singing. Only the practical teacher of singing has the opportunity to discover the real needs of the student; and only the artist of wide experience can answer many of the serious questions asked.

The writer's first interest in the subject of voice commenced with the recollection of the wonderfully human and fascinating vocal organ of Henry Ward Beecher, whom he had the joy to know in his early boyhood. The memory of such a voice as that of Beecher is ineradicable. Once, at the same age, he was taken to hear Beecher's rival pulpit orator, the Rev. T. de Witt Talmadge, in the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The harsh, raucous, nasal, penetrating, rasping, irritating voice of that clergyman only served to emphasize the delight in listening to Beecher. Then he heard the wonderful orotund organ of Col. Robert J. Ingersoll and the sonorous, mellow voice of Edwin Booth.

Shortly he found himself enlisted as a soprano in the boy choir of a large Episcopal church. While there be became the soloist, singing many of the leading arias from famous oratorios before he was able to identify the musical importance of such works. Then came a long training in piano and in organ playing, followed by public appearances as a pianist and engagements as an organist and choirmaster in different churches. This, coupled with song composition, musical criticism and editing, experience in conducting, managing concerts, accompanying noted singers and, later, in teach-

ing voice for many years, formed a background that is recounted here only to let the reader know that the conferences were not put down by one unacquainted with the actual daily needs of the student, from his earliest efforts to his platform triumphs.

What Must the Singer Have?

What must the singer have? A voice? Of course. But how good must that voice be? "Ah, there's the rub!" It is this very point which adds so much fascination to the chances of becoming a great singer; and it is this very point upon which so many, many careers have been wrecked. The young singer learns that Jenny Lind was first refused by Garcia because he considered her case hopeless; he learns that Sir George Henschel told Bispham that he had insufficient voice to encourage him to take up the career of the singer; he learns dozens of similar instances; and then he goes to hear some famous singer with slender vocal gifts who, by force of tremendous dramatic power, eclipses dozens with finer voices. He thereupon resolves that "voice" must be a secondary matter in the singer's success.

There could not be a greater mistake. There must be a good vocal basis. There must be a voice capable of development through a sufficient gamut to encompass the great works written for such a voice. It must be capable of development into sufficient "size" and power that it may fill large auditoriums. It must be sweet, true to pitch, clear; and, above all, it must have

that kind of an individual quality which seems to draw the musical interest of the average person to it.

The Perfect Voice

Paradoxically enough, the public does not seem to want the "perfect" voice, but rather, the "human" voice. A noted expert, who for many years directed the recording laboratories of a famous sound reproducing machine company, a man whose acquaintance with great singers of the time is very wide, once told the writer of a singer who made records so perfect from the standpoint of tone that no musical critic could possibly find fault with them. Yet these records did not meet with a market from the general public. The reason is that the public demands something far more than a flawless voice and technically correct singing. It demands the human quality, that wonderful something that shines through the voice of every normal, living being as the soul shines through the eyes. It is this thing which gives individuality and identity to the voice and makes the widest appeal to the greatest number of people.

Patti was not great because her dulcet tones were like honey to the ear. Mere sweetness does not attract vast audiences time and again. Once, in a mediæval German city, the writer was informed that a nightingale had been heard in the *glacis* on the previous night. The following evening a party of friends was formed and wandered through the park whispering with delight at every outburst from the silver throat. Never

had bird music been so beautiful. The next night someone suggested that we go again; but no one could be found who was enthusiastic enough to repeat the experience. The very perfection of the nightingale's song, once heard, had been sufficient.

The Lure of Individuality

Certain performers in vaudeville owe their continued popularity to the fascinating individuality of their voices. Albert Chevalier, once heard, could never be forgotten. His pathetic lilt to "My Old Dutuch" has made thousands weep. When he sings such a number he has a far higher artistic control over his audience than many an elaborately trained singer trilling away at some very complicated aria.

A second-rate opera singer once bemoaned his fate to the writer. He complained that he was obliged to sing for $100.00 a week, notwithstanding his years of study and preparation, while Harry Lauder, the Scotch comedian, could get $1000 a night on his tours. As a matter of fact Mr. Lauder, entirely apart from his ability as an actor, had a far better voice and had that appealing quality that simply commandeers his auditors the moment he opens his mouth.

Any method or scheme of teaching the art of singing that does not seek to develop the inherent intellectual and emotional vocal complexion of the singer can never approach a good method. Vocal perfection that does not admit of the manifestation of the real individual has been the death knell of many an aspiring student.

Nordica, Jean de Reszke, Victor Maurel, Plançon, Sims Reeves, Schumann-Heink, Garden, Dr. Wüllner, Evan Williams, Galli-Curci, and especially our greatest of American singers, David Bispham, all have manifested a vocal individuality as unforgetable to the ear as their countenances are to the eye.

If the reader happens to be a young singer and can grasp the significance of the previous paragraph, he may have something more valuable to him than many lessons. The world is not seeking merely the perfect voice but a great musical individuality manifested through a voice developed to express that individuality in the most natural and at the same time the most comprehensive manner possible. Therefore, young man and young woman, does it not seem of the greatest importance to you to develop, first of all, the *mind and the soul*, so that when the great hour comes, your audience will hear through the notes that pour from your throat something of your intellectual and emotional character? They will not know how, nor will they ask why they hear it,—but its manifestation will either be there or it will not be there. Upon this will depend much of your future success. It can not be concealed from the discerning critics in whose hands your progress rests. The high intellectual training received in college by Ffrangçon Davies, David Bispham, Plunkett Greene, Herbert Witherspoon, Reinald Werrenrath and others, is just as apparent to the intelligent listener, in their singing at recitals, as it would be in their conversation. Others have

received an equivalent intellectual training in other ways. The young singer, who thinks that in the future he can "get by" without such a training, is booked for disappointment. Get a college education if you can; and, if you can not, fight to get its equivalent. No useful experience in the singer's career is a wasted one. The early instrumental training of Melba, Sembrich, Campanari, Hempel, Dalmores, Garden, and Galli-Curci, shows out in their finished singing, in wonderful manner. Every singer should be able to play the piano well. It has a splendid effect in the musical discipline of the mind. In European conservatories, in many instances, the study of the piano is compulsory.

Your Philosophy of Singing

The student of singing should be an inveterate reader of "worthwhile" comments upon his art. In this way, if he has a discriminating mind, he will be able to form a "philosophy of singing" of his own. Richard Wagner prefaced his music dramas with lengthy essays giving his reasons for pursuing a certain course. Whatever their value may be to the musical public at this time, it could not have been less than that to the great master when he was fighting to straighten out for his own satisfaction in his own mind just what he should do and how he should do it. Therefore, read interminably; but believe nothing that you read until you have weighed it carefully in your own mind and determined its usefulness in its application to your own particular case.

The student will find the following books of real value in his quest for vocal truth: *The Philosophy of Singing*, Clara Kathleen Rogers; *The Vocal Instructor*, E. J. Myer; *The Psychology of Singing*, David C. Taylor; *How to Sing*, Lilli Lehmann; *Reminiscences of a Quaker Singer*, David Bispham; *The Art of the Singer*, W. J. Henderson.

The student should also read the biographies of famous singers and keep in touch with the progress of the art, through reading the best magazines.

The History of Singing

The history of singing parallels the history of civilization. Egypt, Israel, Greece and Rome made their contributions; but how they sang and what they sang we can not definitely know because of the destruction of the bridge between ancient and modern notation, and because not until Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877, was there any tangible means of recording the voices of the singers. The wisdom of Socrates, Plato and Cæsar is therefore of trifling significance in helping us to find out more than how highly the art was regarded. The absurd antics of Nero, in his ambition to distinguish himself as a singer, indicated in some more or less indefinite way the importance given to singing in the heyday of Rome. The incessant references to singing, in Greek literature, tell us that singing was looked upon not merely as an accomplishment but as one of the necessary arts.

Coincident with the coming of Italian opera, about

1600, we find a great revival of the art of singing; and many of the old Italian masters have bequeathed us some fairly instructive comments upon the art of *bel canto*. That these old Italian teachers were largely individualists and taught empirically, with no set methods other than that which their own ears determined, seems to be accepted quite generally by investigators at this date. The *Osservazione sopra il Canto figurato* of Pietro Francesco Tosi (procurable in English), published in 1723, and the *Reflessioni pratichi sul Canto figurato*, published in 1776, are valuable documents for the serious student, particularly because these men seemed to recognize that the so-called registers should be equalized. With them developed an ever-expanding jargon of voice directions which persist to this day among vocal teachers. Such directions as "sing through the mask" (meaning the face); "sing with the throat open"; "sing as though you were just about to smile"; "sing as though you were just about to experience the sensation of swallowing" (*come bere*); "support the tone"; etc., etc., are often more confusing than helpful. Manual Garcia (1805–1906), who invented the laryngoscope in 1855, made an earnest effort to bring scientific observation to the aid of the vocal teacher, by providing a tiny mirror on the end of a rod, enabling the teacher to see the vocal cords during the process of phonation. How much this actually helped the singing teacher is still a moot point; but it must be remembered that Garcia had many extremely successful pupils, including the immortal Jenny Lind.

The writer again advises the serious student of singing to spend a great deal of time in forming his own conception of the principles by which he can get the most from his voice. Any progressive artist teacher will encourage him in this course. In other words, it is not enough in these days that he shall sing; but he must know how he produces his results and be able to produce them time and time again with constantly increasing success. Note in the succeeding conferences how many of the great singers have given very careful and minute consideration to this. The late Evan Williams spent years of thought and study upon it; and the writer considers that his observations in this volume are among the most important contributions to the literature of voice teaching. This was the only form in which they appeared in print. Only one student in a hundred thousand can dispense with a good vocal teacher, as did the brilliant Galli-Curci or the unforgetable Campanari. A really fine teacher of voice is practically indispensable to most students. This does not mean that the best teacher is the one with the greatest reputation. The reputation of a teacher only too often has depended upon his good fortune early in life in securing pupils who have made spectacular successes in a short time. There are hundreds of splendid vocal teachers in America now, and it is very gratifying to see many of their pupils make great successes in Europe without any previous instruction "on the other side."

Surely nothing can be more helpful to the ambitious

vocal student than the direct advice, personal suggestions and hints of the greatest singers of the time. It is with this thought that the writer takes especial pride in being the medium of the presentation of the following conferences. It is suggested that a careful study of the best sound-reproducing-machine records of the great singers included will add much to the interest of the study of this work.

The enormous incomes received from some vocal gold mines, such as Caruso, John McCormack, Patti, Galli-Curci, and others, have made the lure of the singer's career so great that many young vocalists are inclined to forget that all of the great singers of the day have attained their triumphs only after years of hard work. Galli-Curci's overwhelmingly successful American debut followed years of real labor, when she was glad to accept small engagements in order to advance in her art. John McCormack's first American appearances were at a side show at the St. Louis World's Fair. Sacrifice is often the seed kernel of large success. Too few young singers are willing to plant that kernel. They expect success to come at the end of a few courses of study and a few hundred dollars spent in advertising. The public, particularly the American public, is a wary one. It may be possible to advertise worthless gold mining stock in such a way that thousands may be swindled before the crook behind the scheme is jailed. But it is impossible to sell our public a so-called golden-voiced singer whose voice is really nothing more than tin-foil and very thin tin-foil at that.

Every year certain kinds of slippery managers accept huge fees from would-be singers, which are supposed to be invested in a mysterious formula which, like the philosopher's stone, will turn a baser metal into pure gold. No campaign of advertising spent upon a mediocrity or an inadequately prepared artist can ever result in anything but a disastrous waste. Don't spend a penny in advertising until you have really something to sell which the public will want. It takes years to make a fine singer known; but it takes only one concert to expose an inadequate singer. Every one of the artists represented in this book has been "through the mill" and every one has triumphed gloriously in the end. There is one road. They have defined it in remarkable fashion in these conferences. The sign-posts read, "Work, Sacrifice, Joy, Triumph."

With the multiplicity of methods and schemes for practice it is not surprising that the main essentials of the subject are sometimes obscured. That such discussions as those included in this book will enable the thinking student to crystallize in his own mind something which to him will become a method long after he has left his student days, can not be questioned. One of the significant things which he will have to learn is perfect intonation, keeping on the right pitch all the time; and another thing is freedom from restriction, best expressed by the word poise. William Shakespeare, greatest of English singing teachers of his day, once expressed these important points in the following words:

"The Foundations of the Art of Singing are two in number:

"First: (A) How to take breath and (B) how to press it out slowly. (The act of slow exhalation is seen in our endeavor to warm some object with the breath.)

"Second: How to sing to this controlled breath pressure.

"It may be interesting at this point to observe how the old singers practiced when seeking a full tone while using little breath. They watched the effect of their breath by singing against a mirror or against the flame of a taper. If a note required too much pressure the command over the breath was lost—the mirror was unduly tarnished or the flame unduly puffed. 'Ah' was their pattern vowel, being the most difficult on account of the openness of the throat—the vowel which, by letting more breath out, demanded the greatest control. The perfect poise of the instrument on the controlled breath was found to bring about *three* important results to the singer:

"*First result*—Unerring tuning. As we do not experience any sensation of consciously using the muscles in the throat, we can only judge of the result by listening. When the note sounds to the right breath control it springs unconsciously and instantaneously to the tune we intended. The freedom of the instrument not being interfered with, it follows through our wishing it—like any other act naturally performed. This unerring tuning is the first result of a right foundation.

"*Second result*—The throat spaces are felt to be

unconscious and arrange themselves independently in the different positions prompted by the will and necessary to pronounciation, the factors being freedom of tongue and soft palate, and freedom of lips.

"*Third result*—The complete freedom of the face and eyes which adapt themselves to those changes necessary to the expression of the emotions.

"The artist can increase the intensity of his tone without necessarily increasing its volume, and can thus produce the softest effect. By his skill he can emit the soft note and cause it to travel as far as a loud note, thus arousing emotions as of distance, as of memories of the past. He produces equally well the more powerful gradations without overstepping the boundary of noble and expressive singing. On the other hand, an indifferent performer would scarcely venture on a soft effect, the absence of breath support would cause him to become inaudible and should he attempt to crescendo such a note the result would be throaty and unsatisfactory."

Another most important subject is diction, and the writer can think of nothing better than to quote from Mme. Lilli Lehmann, the greatest Wagnerian soprano of the last century.

"Let us now consider some of the reasons why some American singers have failed to succeed. How do American women begin their studies? Many commence their lessons in December or January. They take two or three half-hour lessons a week, even attending these irregularly, and ending their year's instruc-

tion in March or, at the latest, in April. Surely music study under such circumstances is little less than farcical. The voice, above all things, needs careful and constant attention. Moreover, many are lacking lamentably in the right preparations. Some are evidently so benighted as to believe that preparation is unnecessary. Or do they believe that the singing teacher must also provide a musical and general education?

"Is there one among them, for instance, who can enunciate her own language faultlessly; that is, as the stage demands? Many fail to realize that they should, first of all, be taught elocution (diction) by teachers who can show them how to pronounce vowels purely and beautifully, and consonants correctly and distinctly, so as to give words their proper sounds. How can anyone expect to sing in a foreign language when he has no idea of his own language—no idea how this wonderful member, the tongue, should be used—to say nothing of the terrible faults in speaking? I endorse the study of elocution as a preparatory study for all singing. No one can realize how much simpler and how much more efficient it would make the work of the singing teacher."

Finally, the writer feels that there is much to be inferred from the popular criticism of the man in the street—"There is no music in that voice." Mr. Hoi-polloi knows just what he means when he says that. As a matter of fact, the average voice has very little music in it. By music the man means that the pitch of the tones that he hears shall be so unmistakable and

so accurate, that the quality shall be so pure and the thought of the singer so sincere and so worth-while, that the auditor feels the wonderful human emotion that comes only from listening to a beautiful human voice. Put real music in every tone and your success will not be far distant.

JAMES FRANCIS COOKE.

Bala, Pa.

THE TECHNIC OF OPERATIC PRODUCTION

What the Student Who Aspires to Go Into Opera Should Know about the Mechanical Side of Giving an Operatic Performance

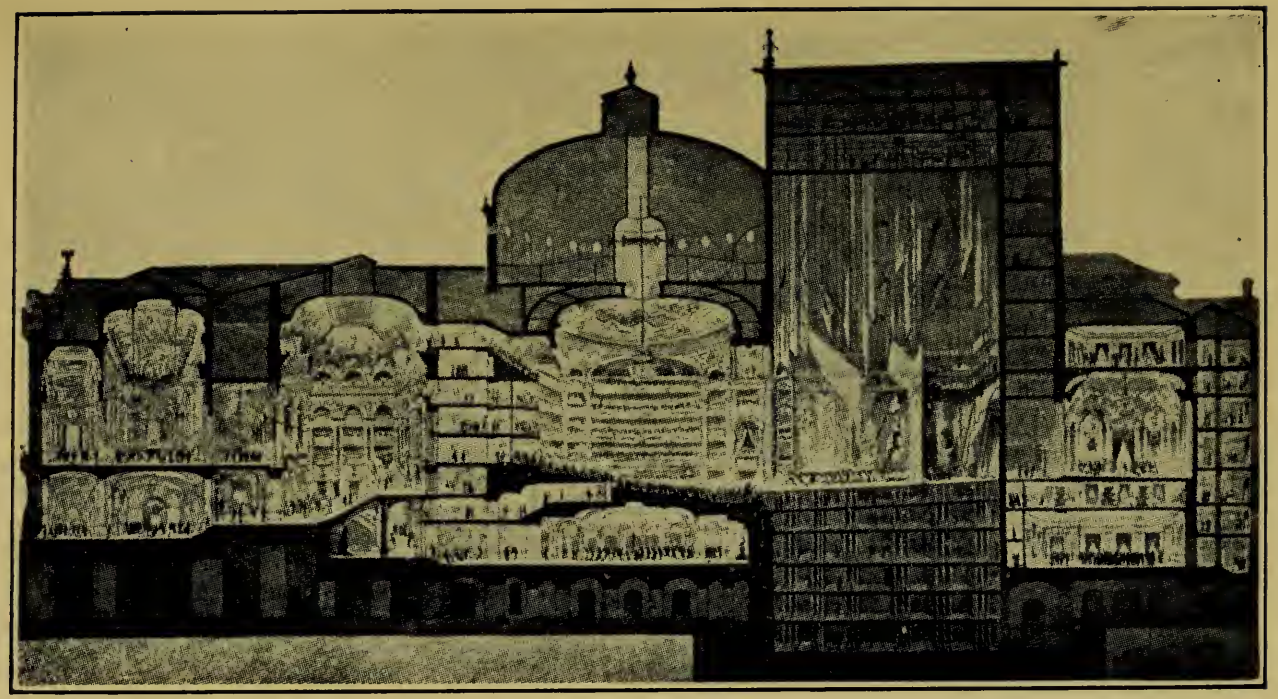
Even after one has mastered the art of singing there is still much that the artist must learn about the actual working of the opera house itself. This of course is best done by actual experience; but the writer has found that much can be gained by insight into some of the conditions that exist in the modern opera house.

In the childhood of hundreds of people now living opera was given with scenery and costumes that would be ridiculed in vaudeville if seen to-day. Pianos, lamps, chairs and even bird cages were often painted right on the scenery. One set of costumes and properties was made to do for the better part of the repertoire in such a way that even the most flexible imagination was stretched to the breaking point several times during the performance. Now, most of this has changed and the modern opera house stage is often a mechanical and electrical marvel.

It is most human to want to peep behind the scenes and see something of the machinery which causes the wonderful spectacle of the stage. We remember how, as children, we longed to open the clock and see the wheels go round. Behind the asbestos curtain there is a world of ropes, lights, electrical and mechanical

machinery, paints and canvas, which is always a territory filled with interest to those who sit in the seats in front.

Much of the success of the opera in New York, during the early part of the present century, was due to the great efficiency of the Director, Giulio Gatti-Casazza. Gatti-Casazza was a graduate of the Royal Italian Naval Academy at Leghorn, and had been intended for a career as a naval engineer before he undertook the management of the opera at Ferrara. This he did because his father was on the board of directors of the Ferrara opera house, and the institution had not been a great success. His directorship was so well executed that he was appointed head director of the opera at La Scala in Milan and astonished the musical world with his wonderful Italian productions of Wagner's operas under the conductorship of Toscanini. In New York many reforms were instituted, and later took the New York company to Paris, giving performances which made Europe realize that opera in New York is as fine as that in any music center in the world, and in some particulars finer. The New York opera is more cosmopolitan than that of any other country. Its company includes artists from practically every European country, but fortunately includes more American singers and musicians to-day than at any time in our operatic history. We are indebted to the staff of the Metropolitan Opera House, experts who, with the kind permission of the director, furnished the writer with the following interesting information:



Profile of the Paris Grand Opera. (Note That the Stage Section Is Larger Than the Auditorium. Also Note the Immense Space Given to the Grand Entrance Stairway.)

A World of Detail

Few people have any idea of how many persons and how many departments are connected with the opera and its presentation. Considering them in order, they might be classed as follows:

The General Manager and his assistants.
The Musical Director and his assistants.
The Stage Director and his assistants.
The Technical Director and his assistants.
The Business Director and his assistants.
The Wardrobe Director and his assistants.
The Master of Properties and his assistants.
The Head Engineer and his assistants.
The Accountant and his assistants.
The Advertising Manager and his assistants.
The Press Representatives and his assistants.
The Superintendent and his assistants.
The Head Usher and his assistants.
The Electrician and his assistants.

Few of these important and necessary factors in the production ever appear before the public. Like the miners who supply us with the wealth of the earth, they work, as it were, underground. No one is more directly concerned with making the production than the Technical Director. In that we are fortunate in having the views of Mr. Edward Siedle, Technical Director of the Metropolitan Opera Company, of New York. The complete picture that the public sees is made under the supervision of Mr. Siedle, and during

the actual production he is responsible for all of the technical details. His experience has extended over a great many years in different countries. He writes:

The Technic of the Production

I understand you wish me to give you some idea of the technicalities involved in producing the stage pictures which go to form an opera. Let us suppose it is an opera by an American composer. My first procedure would be to place myself in touch with the author and composer. After having one or two talks with them I secure a libretto. When a mutual understanding is agreed upon between us as to the character of the scenes required and the positions of particular things in relation to the business which has to take place during the performance, I make my plans accordingly, and look up all the data available bearing upon the subject.

It is now time to call in the scenic artist, giving him my views and ideas, so that he can start upon the designing and painting of the scenery. His first design would be in the form of a rough sketch and a more clearly worked-out ground plan. After further discussion and alterations we should definitely agree upon a scheme, and he would proceed to make a scale model. When this model is finished it is a perfect miniature scene of the opera as it will appear on the night the opera is produced.

The author and composer are then called in to meet the impresario and myself for a final consulta-

tion. We now finally criticize our plans, making any alterations which may seem necessary to us. When these alterations are completed the plans are handed over to the carpenter, who immediately starts making his frames and covering them with canvas, working from the scale model. The scenic artist is now able to commence his work in earnest.

The "properties" are our next consideration. Sketches and patterns are made, authorities are consulted, and everything possible is done to aid the Property Master in doing his part of the work.

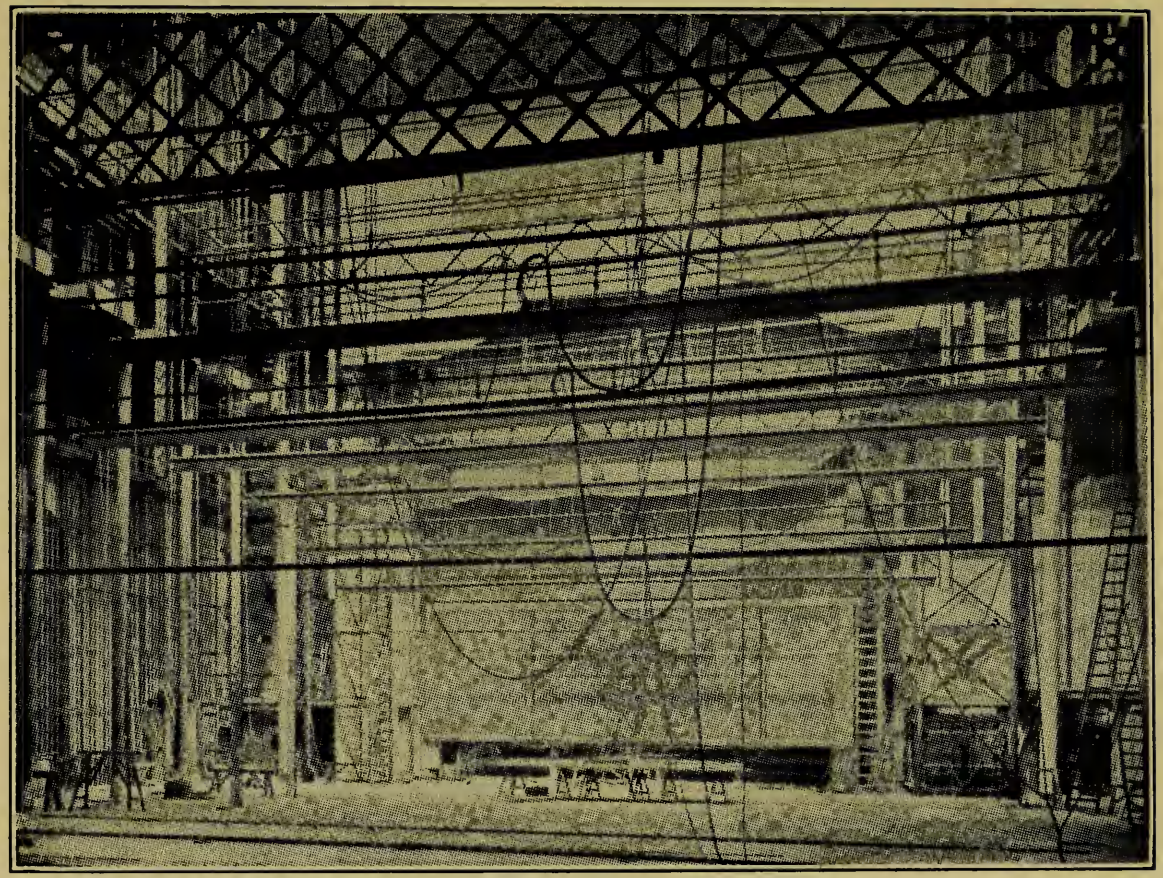
Unless the opera in question calls for special mechanical effects, or special stage machinery, the scene is adapted to the stage as it is. If anything exceptional has to be achieved, however, special machinery is constructed.

The designing of the costumes is gone over in much the same way as the construction of the scenery. The period in which the opera is laid, the various characters and their station in life, are all well talked over by the composer, author and myself. The costume designer is then called in, and after listening to what every one has to say and reading the libretto, he submits his designs. These, when finished, are criticized by the impresario, the composer, the author and myself, and any suggestion which will improve them is accepted by the designer, and alterations are made until everything is satisfactory. The designs are then sent to the costume maker.

The important matter of lighting and electrical

effects is not dealt with until after the scenery has been completed, painted and set up on the stage, except in the case when exceptional effects are demanded. The matter is then carefully discussed and arranged so that the apparatus will be ready by the time the earlier rehearsals are taking place.

The staff required by a Technical Director in such an institution as the Metropolitan Opera House is necessarily a large one. He needs an able scenic artist with his assistants and an efficient carpenter with his assistants to complete the scenic arrangements as indicated in the models. The completed scenery is delivered over to the stage carpenter who has a large body of assistants, and is held responsible for the running of the opera during rehearsals and performances. The stage carpenter has also under his control a body of carpenters who work all night, commencing their duties after the opera is over, removing all the scenery used in the opera just finished from the opera house and bringing from the various storehouses the scenery required for the next performance or rehearsal. The electrician is an important member of my staff, and he, of course, has a number of assistants. The Property Master and his assistants and the Wardrobe Mistress and her assistants also are extremely important. Then the active engineer who is responsible for the heating and ventilating, and also for many of the stage effects, is another necessary and important member. In all, the Opera House, when in full swing, requires for the technical or stage detail work alone about 185 people.



How an Operatic Stage Looks From Behind.

Thus far we have not considered the musical side of the production. This is, of course, under the management of the General Director and the leading Musical Director. Very little time at best is at the disposal of the musical director. A director like Toscanini would, in a first-class opera house, with a full and competent company, require about fifteen days to complete the rehearsals, and other preparations for such a production as *Aïda*, should such a work be brought out as a novelty. A good conductor needs at least four orchestra rehearsals. *Pelleas et Melisande* would require more extensive rehearsing, as the music is of a new order and is, in a sense, a new form of art.

Important Rehearsals

While the head musical director is engaged with the principals and the orchestra, the Chorus-master spends his time training the chorus. If his work is not efficiently done, the entire production is greatly impeded. The assistant conductors undertake the work of rehearsing the soloists prior to their appearance in connection with the orchestra. They must know the Head Director's ideas perfectly, and see that the soloists do not introduce interpretations which are too much at variance with his ideas and the accepted traditions. In all about ten rehearsals are given to a work in a room set aside for that purpose, then there are five stage rehearsals, and finally four full ensemble rehearsals with orchestra. In putting on an old work, such as those in the standard repertoire, no rehearsals are demanded.

The musical forces of the Metropolitan Opera House, for instance, make a company of at least two leading conductors, twelve assistant conductors, about ninety soloists, a chorus numbering at least one hundred and twenty-five singers, thirty musicians for stage music, about twenty stage attendants and an orchestra of from eighty to one hundred performers, to say nothing of the costume, scenic and business staff, making a little industry all in itself.

The General Director, the Stage Manager, and often the Musical Director make innumerable suggestions to the singers regarding the proper histrionic presentation of their rôles. As a rule singers give too little attention to the dramatic side of their work and demand too much of the stage manager. In recent years there has been a great improvement in this. Prior to the time of Gluck, Weber and Wagner, acting in opera was a matter of ridicule.

The Ballet

About seventy or one hundred persons make up the ballet of a modern grand opera. At least ten years of continuous study are required to make a finished ballet dancer in the histrionic sense. Many receive very large fees for their services. The art of stage dancing also has undergone many great reforms in recent years; and the ballets of to-day are therefore much more popular than they were in the latter part of the last century. The most popular ballets of to-day are the *Coppelia* and *Sylvia* of Delibes. The ballets from

the operas of *La Gioconda, Samson et Delila, Armide, Mephistophele, Aïda, Orfeo, L'Africaine,* and *The Damnation of Faust* also are very popular.

At a modern opera house like the Metropolitan in New York City the number of employees will be between six hundred and seven hundred, and the cost of a season will be about one million dollars.

FRANCES ALDA

(MME. GIULIO GATTI-CASAZZA)

BIOGRAPHICAL

Mme. Frances Alda was born at Christ Church, New Zealand, May 31st, 1883. She was educated at Melbourne and studied singing with Mathilde Marchesi in Paris. Her début was made in Massenet's *Manon*, at the Opera Comique in Paris in 1904. After highly successful engagements in Paris, Brussels, Parma and Milan (where she created the title rôle in the Italian version of *Louise*), she made her American début at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York as Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Since her initial success in New York she has been connected with the Metropolitan stage every season. In 1910 she married Giulio Gatti-Casazza, manager of the Metropolitan Opera House, and is probably better able to speak upon the subject herewith discussed than any one in America. She has also appeared with great success in London, Warsaw, Buenos Aires and other cities, in opera and in concert. Many of the most important leading rôles in modern opera have been created by her in America.



MME. FRANCES ALDA.

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WHAT THE AMERICAN GIRL SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AN OPERATIC CAREER

MME. FRANCES ALDA (MME. GATTI-CASAZZA)

Regularity and Success

To the girl who aspires to have an operatic career, who has the requisite vocal gifts, physical health, stage presence and—most important of all—a high degree of intelligence, the great essential is regular daily work. This implies regular lessons, regular practice, regular exercise, regular sleep, regular meals—in fact, a life of regularity. The daily lesson in most cases seems an imperative necessity. Lessons strung over a series of years merely because it seems more economical to take one lesson a week instead of seven rarely produce the expected results. Marchesi, with her famous wisdom on vocal matters, advised twenty minutes a day and then not more than ten minutes at a time.

For nine months I studied with the great Parisian maestra and in my tenth month I made my début. Of course, I had sung a great deal before that time and also could play both the piano and the violin. A thorough musical knowledge is always valuable. The early years of the girl who is destined for an operatic career may be much more safely spent with Czerny exercises for the piano or Kreutzer studies for the violin than with Concone Solfeggios for the voice. Most girls

over-exercise their voices during the years when they are too delicate. It always pays to wait and spend the time in developing the purely musical side of study.

Moderation and Good Sense

More voices collapse from over-practice and more careers collapse from under-work than from anything else. The girl who hopes to become a prima donna will dream of her work morning, noon and night. Nothing can take it out of her mind. She will seek to study every imaginable thing that could in any way contribute to her equipment. There is so much to learn that she must work hard to learn all. Even now I study pretty regularly two hours a day, but I rarely sing more than a few minutes. I hum over my new rôles with my accompanist, Frank La Forge, and study them in that way. It was to such methods as this that Marchesi attributed the wonderful longevity of the voices of her best-known pupils. When they followed the advice of the dear old maestra their voices lasted a long, long time. Her vocal exercises were little more than scales sung very slowly, single, sustained tones repeated time and again until her critical ear was entirely satisfied, and then arpeggios. After that came more complicated technical drills to prepare the pupil for the fioriture work demanded in the more florid operas. At the base of all, however, were the simplest kind of exercises. Through her discriminating sense of tone quality, her great persistence and her boundless enthusiasm, she used these simple vocal

materials with a wizardry that produced great *prime donne*.

The Precious Head Voice

Marchesi laid great stress upon the use of the head voice. This she illustrated to all her pupils herself, at the same time not hesitating to insist that it was impossible for a male teacher to teach the head voice properly. (Marchesi herself carried out her theories by refusing to teach any male applicants.) She never let any pupil sing above F on the top line of the treble staff in anything but the head voice. They rarely ever touched their highest notes with full voice. The upper part of the voice was conserved with infinite care to avoid early breakdowns. Even when the pupils sang the top notes they did it with the feeling that there was still something in reserve. In my operatic work at present I feel this to be of greatest importance. The singer who exhausts herself upon the top notes is neither artistic nor effective.

The American Girl's Chances in Opera

The American girl who fancies that she has less chances in opera than her sisters of the European countries is silly. Look at the lists of artists at the Metropolitan, for instance. The list includes twice as many artists of American nationality as of any other nation. This is in no sense the result of pandering to the patriotism of the American public. It is simply a matter of supply and demand. New Yorkers demand the best opera in the world and expect the best voices

in the world. The management would accept fine artists with fine voices from China or Africa or the North Pole if they were forthcoming. A diamond is a diamond no matter where it comes from. The management virtually ransacks the musical marts of Europe every year for fine voices. Inevitably the list of American artists remains higher. On the whole, the American girls have better natural voices, more ambition and are willing to study seriously, patiently and energetically. This is due in a measure to better physical conditions in America and in Australia, another free country that has produced unusual singers. What is the result? America is now producing the best and enjoying the best. There is more fine music of all kinds now in New York during one week than one can get in Paris in a month and more than one can get in Milan in six months. This has made New York a great operatic and musical center. It is a wonderful opportunity for Americans who desire to enter opera.

The Need for Superior Intelligence

There was a time in the halcyon days of the old coloratura singers when the opera singer was not expected to have very much more intelligence than a parrot. Any singer who could warble away at runs and trills was a great artist. The situation has changed entirely today. The modern opera-goer demands great acting as well as great singing. The opera house calls for brains as well as voices. There should properly be great and sincere rivalry among fine singers. The singer must

listen to other singers with minute care and patience, and then try to learn how to improve herself by self-study and intelligent comparison. Just as the great actor studies everything that pertains to his rôle, so the great singer knows the history of the epoch of the opera in which he is to appear, he knows the customs, he may know something of the literature of the time. In other words, he must live and think in another atmosphere before he can walk upon the stage and make the audience feel that he is really a part of the picture. Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree gave a presentation that was convincing and beautiful, while the mediocre actor, not willing to give as much brain work to his performance, falls far short of an artistic performance.

A modern performance of any of the great works as they are presented at the Metropolitan is rehearsed with great care and attention to historical detail. Instances of this are the performances of *L'Amore di Tre Re*, *Carmen*, *Bohême*, and *Lohengrin*, as well as such great works as *Die Meistersinger*, and *Tristan und Isolde*.

Physical Strength and Singing

Few singers seem to realize that an operatic career will be determined in its success very largely through physical strength, all other factors being present in the desired degree. That is, the singer must be strong physically in order to succeed in opera. This applies to women as well as to men. No one knows what the physical strain is, how hard the work and study are.

In front of you is a sea of highly intelligent, cultured people, who for years have been trained in the best traditions of the opera. They pay the highest prices paid anywhere for entertainment. They are entitled to the best. To face such an audience and maintain the high traditions of the house through three hours of a complicated modern score is a musical, dramatic and intellectual feat that demands, first of all, a superb physical condition. Every day of my life in New York I go for a walk, mostly around the reservoir in Central Park, because it is high and the air is pure and free. As a result I seldom have a cold, even in midwinter. I have not missed a performance in eight years, and this, of course, is due to the fact that my health is my first daily consideration.



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PASQUALE AMATO.

PASQUALE AMATO

Biographical

Pasquale Amato, for so many years the leading baritone at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, was born at Naples March 21st, 1878. He was intended for the career of an engineer and was educated at the Instituto Tecnico Domenico. He then studied at the Conservatory of Naples from 1896 to 1899. His teachers there were Cucialla and Carelli. He made his début as Germont in *La Traviata* in the Teatro Bellini at Naples in 1900. Thereafter his successes have been exceptionally great in the music centers of South America, Italy, Russia, England, Egypt, and Germany. He has created numerous rôles at the Metropolitan Opera House, among them Jack Rance in the *Girl of the Golden West;* Golaud in *Pelleas and Melisande* (Milan); *L'Amore di Tre Re; Cyrano* (Damrosch); *Lodoletta* (Mascagni); *Madame Sans Gene.* He has visited South America as an artist no less than ten times. His voice is susceptible of fine dramatic feeling.

MODERN VOCAL METHODS IN ITALY

PASQUALE AMATO

When I was about sixteen years of age my voice was sufficiently settled to encourage my friends and family to believe that I might become a singer. This is a proud discovery for an Italian boy, as singing—especially operatic singing—is held in such high regard in Italy that one naturally looks forward with joy to a career in the great opera houses of one's native country and possibly to those over the sea. At eighteen I was accordingly entered in the conservatory, but not without many conditions, which should be of especial interest to young American vocal students. The teachers did not immediately accept me as good vocal material. I was recognized to have musical inclinations and musical gifts and I was placed under observation so that it might be determined whether the state-supported conservatory should direct my musical education along vocal lines or along other lines.

This is one of the cardinal differences between musical education in America and musical education in Italy. In America a pupil suddenly determines that he is destined to become a great opera singer and forthwith he hires a teacher to make him one. He might have been destined to become a plumber, or a lawyer, or a comedian, but that has little to do with the matter if he has money and can employ a teacher. In Italy

such a direction of talents would be considered a waste to the individual and to the state. Of course the system has its very decided faults, for a corps of teachers with poor or biased judgment could do a great deal of damage by discouraging real talent, as was, indeed, the case with the great Verdi, who at the age of eighteen was refused admission to the Milan Conservatory by the director, Basili, on the score of lack of talent.

However, for the most part the judges are experienced and skilful men, and when a pupil has been under surveillance for some time the liability of an error in judgment is very slight. Accordingly, after I had spent some time in getting acquainted with music through the study of Notation, Sight-singing, Theory, Harmony, Piano, etc., I was informed at the end of two years that I had been selected for an operatic career. I can remember the time with great joy. It meant a new life to me, for I was certain that with the help of such conservative masters I should succeed.

On the whole, at this time, I consider the Italian system a very wise one for it does not fool away any time with incompetence. I have met so many young musicians who have shown indications of great study but who seem destitute of talent. It seems like coaxing insignificant shrubs to become great oak trees. No amount of coaxing or study will give them real talent if they do not have it, so why waste the money of the state and the money of the individual upon it. On the

other hand, wherever in the world there is real talent, the state should provide money to develop it, just as it provides money to educate the young.

Italian Vocal Teaching

So much has been said about the Old Italian Vocal Method that the very name brings ridicule in some quarters. Nothing has been the subject for so much charlatanry. It is something that any teacher, good or bad, can claim in this country. Every Italian is of course very proud indeed of the wonderful vocal traditions of Italy, the centuries of idealism in search of better and better tone production. There are of course certain statements made by great voice teachers of other days that have been put down and may be read in almost any library in large American cities. But that these things make a vocal method that will suit all cases is too absurd to consider. The good sense of the old Italian master would hold such a plan up to ridicule. Singing is first of all an art, and an art can not be circumscribed by any set of rules or principles.

The artist must, first of all, know a very great deal about all possible phases of the technic of his art and must then adjust himself to the particular problem before him. Therefore we might say that the Italian method was a method and then again that it was no method. As a matter of fact it is thousands of methods—one for each case or vocal problem. For instance, if I were to sing by the same means that Mr. Caruso employs it would not at all be the best thing for my voice, yet for Mr. Caruso it is without question the

very best method, or his vocal quality would not be in such superb condition after constant years of use. He is the proof of his own method.

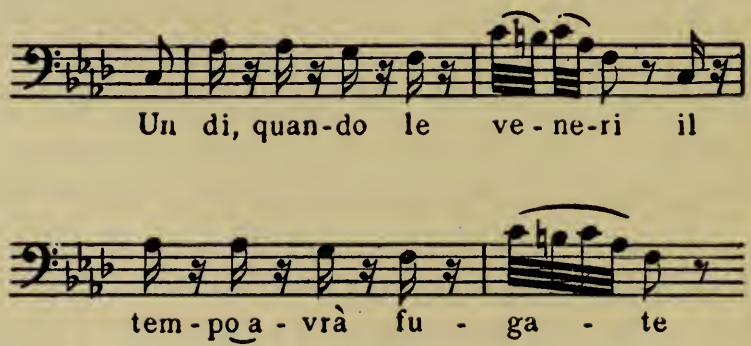
I should say that the Italian vocal teacher teaches, first of all, with his ears. He listens with the greatest possible intensity to every shade of tone-color until his ideal tone reveals itself. This often requires months and months of patience. The teacher must recognize the vocal deficiencies and work to correct them. For instance, I never had to work with my high tones. They are today produced in the same way in which I produced them when I was a boy. Fortunately I had teachers who recognized this and let it go at that.

Possibly the worst kind of a vocal teacher is the one who has some set plan or device or theory which must be followed "willy-nilly" in order that the teacher's theories may be vindicated. With such a teacher no voice is safe. The very best natural voices have to follow some patent plan just because the teacher has been taught in one way, is inexperienced, and has not good sense enough to let nature's perfect work alone. Both of my teachers knew that my high tones were all right and the practice was directed toward the lower tones. They worked me for over ten months on scales and sustained tones until the break that came at E flat above the Bass Clef was welded from the lower tones to the upper tones so that I could sing up or down with no ugly break audible.

I was drilled at first upon the vowel "ah." I hear American vocal authorities refer to "ah" as in father.

That seems to me too flat a sound, one lacking in real resonance. The vowel used in my case in Italy and in hundreds of other cases I have noted is a slightly broader vowel, such as may be found half-way between the vowel "ah" as in father, and the "aw" as in law. It is not a dull sound, yet it is not the sound of "ah" in father. Perhaps the word "doff" or the first syllable of Boston, when properly pronounced, gives the right impression.

I do not know enough of American vocal training to give an intelligent criticism, but I wonder if American vocal teachers give as much attention to special parts of the training as teachers in Italy do. I hope they do, as I consider it very necessary. Consider the matter of staccato. A good vocal staccato is really a very difficult thing—difficult when it is right; that is, when on the pitch—every time, clear, distinct, and at the same time not hard and stiff. It took me weeks to acquire the right way of singing such a passage as *Un di, quando le veneri,* from *Traviata,* but those were very profitable weeks—
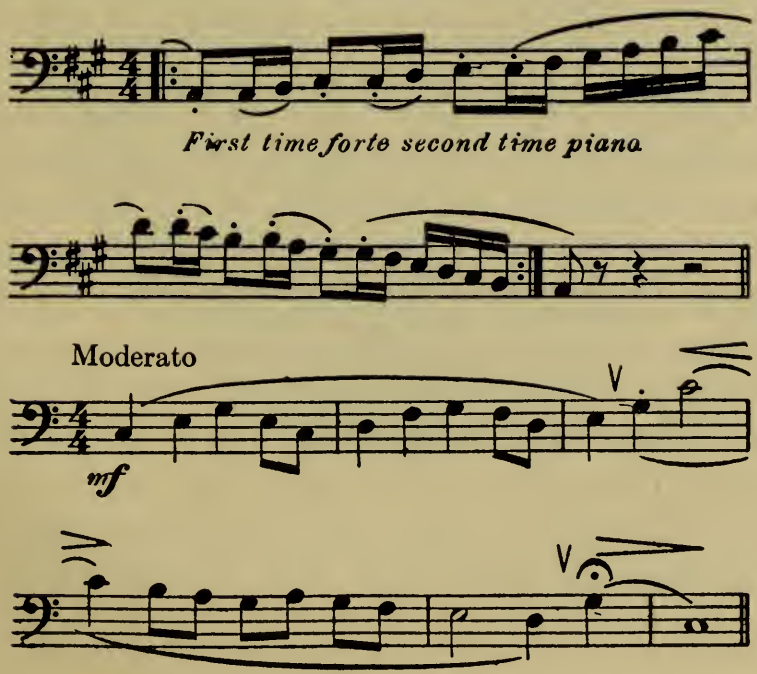


Accurate attack in such a passage is by no means

easy. Anyone can sing it—but *how it is sung* makes the real difference.

The public has very odd ideas about singing. For instance, it would be amazed to learn that *Trovatore* is a much more difficult rôle for me to sing and sing right than either *Parsifal* or *Pelleas and Melisande*. This largely because of the pure vocal demands and the flowing style. The Debussy opera, wonderful as it is, does not begin to make the vocal demands that such a work as *Trovatore* does.

When the singer once acquires proficiency, the acquisition of new rôles comes very easy indeed. The main difficulty is the daily need for drilling the voice until it has the same quality every day. It can be done only by incessant attention. Here are some of the exercises I do every day with my accompanist:



DAVID BISPHAM

Biographical

David Bispham, in many ways the most distinguished of all American singers, was born in Philadelphia January 5th, 1857. Educated at Haverford College, Pa. At first a highly successful amateur in Philadelphia choirs and theatricals, he went to Milan in 1886, studying with Vannuccini, Lamperti and later in London with Shakespeare and Randegger. His operatic début was made in Messager's *Basoche* at the Royal English Opera House, 1891. In 1892 he appeared as Kurvenal and met with great favor. His Wagnerian rôles have been especially distinctive since the start. From 1896 to 1909 he sang alternately at the Metropolitan in New York and at Covent Garden in London, and was admittedly one of the foremost attractions of those great companies in the golden era of our operatic past. He was also immensely in demand as a recital and as an oratorio singer and as a dramatic reader. Few singers have shown the versatility and mastery of David Bispham and few have been so justly entitled to the academic honors LL.D., B.A., and Mus. Doc., which he had earned. He was the author of numerous articles on singing—the very successful autobiography, "A Quaker Singer's Reminiscences," and the collections, "David Bispham's Recital Album," "The David Bispham Song Book" (for schools). He was also ever a strong champion of the use of the English language in singing. He died in New York City Oct. 2d, 1921.



David Bispham.

THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF INTERPRETATION

DAVID BISPHAM

So many things enter into the great problem of interpretation in singing that it is somewhat difficult to state definitely just what the young singer should consider the most important. Generally speaking, the following factors are of prime significance:

1. Natural Aptitude.
2. General Education and Culture.
3. Good Musical Training.
4. Accurate Vocal Training.
5. Familiarity with Traditions.
6. Freedom of Mind.
7. Good Health.
8. Life Experience.
9. Personal Magnetism—one of the most essential, —and
10. Idealism.

1. *Natural Aptitude.*—You will notice that foremost consideration is given to those broad general qualities without which all the technical and musical training of the world is practically worthless. The success of the art worker in all lines depends first upon the nature of the man or woman. Technical training of the highest and best kind is essential, but that which moves great audiences is not alone the mechanics of an art, but rather the broad education, experi-

ence, ideals, culture, the human sympathy and magnetism of the artist.

2. *The Value of Education and Culture.*—I cannot emphasize too strongly the value of a good general education and wide culture for the singer. The day has passed when a pretty face or a well-rounded ankle could be mistaken for art on the operatic stage. The public now demands something more than the heroic looking young fellow who comes down to the footlights with the assurance of youth and offers, for real vocal art, a voice fresh but crudely trained, and a bungling interpretation.

Good education has often been responsible for the phenomenal success of American singers in European opera houses. Before the last war, in nearly all of the great operatic centers of the Continent, one found Americans ranking with the greatest artists in Europe. This was a most propitious condition, for it meant that American audiences have been compelled to give the long-delayed recognition to our own singers, and methods of general and vocal education.

In most cases the young people of America who aspire to operatic triumphs come from a somewhat better class than singers do in Europe. They have had, in most cases, better educational, cultural and home advantages than the average European student. Their minds are trained to study intelligently; they are acquainted with the history of the great nations of the world; their tastes are cultivated, and they are filled with the American energy which is one of the

marvels of the centuries. More than this, they have had a kind of moral uplift in their homes which is of immense value to them. They have higher ideals in life, they are more businesslike and they keep their purposes very clearly in view. This has created jealousy in some European centers; but it is simply a case of the survival of the fittest, and Europe was compelled to bow in recognition of this. Vocal art in our own land is no longer to be ignored, for our standards are as high as the highest in the world, and we are educating a race of singers of which any country might be proud.

3. *Good Musical Training.*—A thorough musical training—that is, a training upon some musical instrument such as the piano—is extremely desirable, but not absolutely essential; for the instrument called the Human Voice can be played on as effectively as a violin. The singer who is convinced of his ability, but who has not had such advantages in early youth, should not be discouraged. He can acquire a thorough knowledge of the essentials later on, but he will have to work very much harder to get his knowledge—as I was obliged to do. Artistic ability is by no means a certain quality. The famous art critic, Vassari, has called our attention to the fact that one painter who produced wonderful pictures had an exhaustive technical training, another arising at his side who also achieved wonderful results had to secure them by means of much bungling self-study. It is very hard to repress artistic ability. As the Bible says: "Many

waters cannot quench love." So it is with music; if the ability is there, it will come to the front through fire and water.

4. *Accurate and Rational Vocal Training.*—I have added the word rational for it seems a necessary term at a time when so much vocal teaching is apparently in the hands of "faddists." There is only one way to sing, that is *the right way*, the way that is founded upon natural conditions. So much has been said in print about breathing, and placing the voice, and resonance, that anything new might seem redundant at this time. The whole thing in a nutshell is simply to make an effort to get the breath under such excellent control that it will obey the will so easily and fluently that the singer is almost unconscious of any means he may employ to this end. This can come only through long practice and careful observation. When the breath is once under proper control the supply must be so adjusted that neither too much nor too little will be applied to the larynx at one time. How to do this can be discovered only by much practice and self-criticism. When the tone has been created it must be reinforced and colored by passing through the mouth and nose, and the latter is a very present help in time of vocal trouble. This leads to a good tone on at least twenty-six steps and half-steps of the scale and with twenty or more vowel sounds—no easy task by any means. All this takes time, but there is no reason why it should take an interminable amount of time. If good results are not forthcoming in from nine months

to a year, something is wrong with either the pupil or the teacher.

The matter of securing vocal flexibility should not be postponed too long, but may in many instances be taken up in conjunction with the studies in tone production, after the first principles have been learned. Thereafter one enters upon the endless and indescribably interesting field of securing a repertoire. Only a teacher with wide experience and intimacy with the best in the vocal literature of the world can correctly grade and select pieces suitable to the ever-changing needs of the pupil.

No matter how wonderful the flexibility of the voice, no matter how powerful the tones, no matter how extensive the repertoire, the singer will find all this worthless unless he possesses a voice that is susceptible to the expression of every shade of mental and emotional meaning which his intelligence, experience and general culture have revealed to him in the work he is interpreting. At all times his voice must be under control. Considered from the mechanical standpoint, the voice resembles the violin, the breath, as it passes over the vocal cords, corresponding to the bow and the resonance chambers corresponding to the resonance chambers in the violin.

5. *Familiarity With Vocal Traditions.*—We come to the matter of the study of the traditional methods of interpreting vocal masterpieces. We must, of course, study these traditions, but we must not be slaves to them. In other words, we must know the past in order

to interpret masterpieces properly in the present. We must not, however, sacrifice that great quality—individuality—for slavery to convention. If the former Italian method of rendering certain arias was marred by the tremolo of some famous singers, there is no good artistic reason why any one should retain anything so hideous as a tremolo solely because it is traditional.

There is a capital story of a young American singer who went to a European opera house with all the characteristic individuality and inquisitiveness of his people. In one opera the stage director told him to go to the back of the stage before singing his principal number and then walk straight down to the footlights and deliver the aria. "Why must I go to the back first?" asked the young singer. The director was amazed and blustered: "Why? Why, because the great Rubini did it that way—he created the part; it is the tradition." But the young singer was not satisfied, and finally found an old chorus man who had sung with Rubini, and asked him whether the tradition was founded upon a custom of the celebrated singer. "Yes," replied the chorus man, "da gretta Rubini he granda man. He go waya back; then he comea front; then he sing. Ah, grandissimo!" "But," persisted the young American, "*Why did he go to the back before he sang?*" "Oh!" exclaimed the excited Italian; "Why he go back? He go to spit!"

Farcical as this incident may seem, many musical traditions are founded upon customs with quite as little musical or esthetic importance. Many tra-

ditions are to-day quite as useless as the buttons on the sleeves of our coats, although these very buttons were at one time employed by our forefathers to fasten back the long cuffs. There are, however, certain traditional methods of rendering great masterpieces, and particularly those marked by the florid ornamentation of the days of Handel, Bach and Haydn, which the singer must know. Unfortunately, many of these traditions have not been preserved in print in connection with the scores themselves, and the only way in which the young singer can acquire a knowledge of them is through hearing authoritative artists, or from teachers who have had wide and rich experience.

6. *Freedom of Mind.*—Under ideal conditions the mind should be free for music study and for public performance. This is not always possible; and some artists under great mental pressure have done their best work solely because they felt that the only way to bury sorrow and trouble was to thrust themselves into their artistic life and thus forget the pangs of misfortune. The student, however, should do everything possible to have his mind free so that he can give his best to his work. One who is wondering where the next penny is coming from is in a poor condition to impress an audience. Nevertheless, if the real ability is there it is bound to triumph over all obstacles.

7. *Good Health.*—Good health is one of the great factors of success in singing. Who needs a sounder mind than the artist? Good health comes from good, sensible living. The singer must never forget that the

instrument he plays upon is a part of his body and that that instrument depends for its musical excellence and general condition upon good health. A $20,000 Stradivarius would be worthless if it were placed in a tub of water; and a larynx that earns for its owner from $500 to $1,500 a night is equally valueless when saturated with the poisons that come from intemperate or unwise living. Many of the singer's throat troubles arise from an unhealthy condition of the stomach caused by excesses of diet; but, aside from this, a disease localized in any other part of the body affects the throat sympathetically and makes it difficult for the singer to get good results. Recital work, with its long fatiguing journeys on railroads, together with the other inconveniences of travel and the responsibility and strain that come from knowing that one person alone is to hold from 1,000 to 5,000 people interested for nearly two hours, demands a very sound physical condition.

8. *Life Experience.*—Culture does not come from the schoolroom alone. The refining processes of life are long and varied. As the violin gains in richness of tone and intrinsic value with age, so the singer's life experience has an effect upon the character of his singing. He must have seen life in its broadest sense, to place himself in touch with human sympathy. To do this and still retain the freshness and sweetness of his voice should be his great aim. The singer who lives a narrow and bigoted existence rarely meets with wide popular approval. The public wants to hear in a voice that wonderful something that tells them that it has

had opportunities to know and to understand the human side of song, not giving parrot-like versions of some teacher's way of singing, but that the understanding comes from the very center of the mind, heart and soul. This is particularly true in the field of the song recital. Most of the renowned recital singers of the last half century, including Schumann-Heink, Sembrich, Wüllner, the Henschels and others, were considerably past their youth when they made their greatest successes. A painting fresh from the artist's brush is raw, hard and uninteresting, till time, with its damp and dust, night and day, heat and cold, gives the enriching touch which adds so wonderfully to the softness and beauty of a picture. We singers are all living canvases. Time, and time only, can give us those shades and tints which reveal living experience. The young artist should hear many of the best singers, actors, and speakers, should read many of the best books, should see many beautiful pictures and wonderful buildings. But most of all, he should know and study many people and learn of their joys and their sorrows, their successes and their failures, their strength and their weaknesses, their loves and their hates. In all art human life is reflected, and this is particularly true in the case of vocal art. For years, in my youth, I never failed to attend all of the musical events of consequence in my native city. This was of immense value to me, since it gave me the means of cultivating my own judgment of what was good or bad in singing. Do not fear that you will become *blasé*.

If you have the right spirit every musical event you attend will spur you on.

You may say that it is expensive to hear great singers, and that you can only attend recitals and the opera occasionally. If this is really the case you still have a means of hearing singers which you should not neglect. I refer to the reproducing machines which have grown to be of such importance in vocal education. Phonograph records are nothing short of marvelous, and my earnestness in this cause is shown by the fact that I have long advocated their employment in the public schools, and have placed the matter before the educational authorities of New York. I earnestly urge the music teachers of this country,who are working for the real musical development of our children, to take this matter up in all seriousness. I can assure them that their efforts will bring them rich dividends in increased interest in musical work of their pupils, and the forming of a musical public. But nothing but the classics of song must be used. The time for the scorning of "high-brow" songs is past, and music must help this country to rid itself of the vogue of the "low-brow" and the "tough." Let singers strive to become educated ornaments of their lofty profession.

9. *Personal Magnetism.*—One of the most essential. The subject of "personal magnetism" is ridiculed by some, of course, but rarely laughed at by the artist who has experienced the astonishing phenomena in the opera house or the concert room. Like electricity it is intangible, indefinable, indescribable, but makes its

existence known by manifestations that are almost uncanny. If personal magnetism does not exist, how then can we account for the fact that one pianist can sit down to the instrument and play a certain piece, and that another pianist could play the same piece with the same technical effect but losing entirely the charm and attractiveness with which the first pianist imbued the composition? Personal magnetism does not depend upon personal beauty nor erudition nor even upon perfect health. Henry Irving and Sarah Bernhardt were certainly not beautiful, but they held the world of the theater in the palm of their hand. Some artists have really been in the last stages of severe illness but have, nevertheless, possessed the divine electric spark to inspire hundreds, as did the hectic Chopin when he made his last famous visit to England and Scotland.

Personal magnetism is not a kind of hypnotic influence to be found solely in the concert hall or the theater. Most artists possess it to a certain degree. Without this subtle and mysterious force, success with the public never comes.

10. *Idealism.*—Ideals are the flowers of youth. Only too often they are not tenderly cared for, and the result is that many who have been on the right track are turned in the direction of failure by materialism. It is absolutely essential for the young singer to have high ideals. Direct your efforts to the best in whatever branch of vocal art you determine to undertake. Do not for a moment let mediocrity or the substitution of

artificial methods enter your vision. Holding to your ideal will mean costly sacrifices to you; but all sacrifices are worth while if one can realize one's ideal. The ideal is only another term for Heaven to me. If we could all attain to the ideal, we would all be in a kind of earthly Paradise. It has always seemed to me that when our Lord said "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," he meant that it is at hand for us to possess now; that is the *ideal* in life.



DAME CLARA BUTT.

DAME CLARA BUTT

Biographical

Dame Butt was born at Southwick, Sussex, February 1, 1873. Her first lessons were with D. W. Rootham in Bristol.

In 1889 she won a scholarship at the Royal College of music where the teacher was J. H. Blower. Later she studied for short periods with Bouhy in Paris and Etelka Gerster in Berlin. Her début was made as Ursula in Sullivan's setting of the Longfellow poem, *Golden Legend*. Her success was immediate and very great. She became in demand at all of the great English musical festivals and also sang before enormous audiences for years in the great English cities. In 1900 she married the noted English baritone R. Kennerly Rumford and together they have made many tours, including a tour of the world, appearing everywhere with continued success. Her voice is one of rich, full contralto quality with such individual characteristics that great English composers have written special works to reveal these great natural gifts. Dame Butt received her distinction of "Dame" from King George in 1920. Her happy family life with her children has won her endless admirers among musical people everywhere.

SUCCESS IN CONCERT SINGING

DAME CLARA BUTT

Health and Singing

It must be obvious to all aspiring vocal students that splendid good health is well nigh indispensable to the singer. There have been singers, of course, who have had physical afflictions that have made their public appearances extremely painful, but they have succeeded in spite of these unfortunate drawbacks. In fact, if the young singer is ambitious and has that wonderful gift of directing her efforts in the way most likely to bring fortunate results, even physical weakness may be overcome. By this I mean that the singer will work out some plan for bringing her physical condition to the standard that fine singing demands. I believe most emphatically that the right spirit will conquer obstacles that often seem impassable. One might safely say that nine-tenths of the successes in all branches of artistic work are due to the inextinguishable fire that burns in the heart and mind of the art worker and incites him to pass through any ordeal in order to deliver his message to the world.

Misdirected Effort

The cruel part of it all is that many aspire to become great singers who can never possibly have their hopes

realized. Natural selection rather than destiny seems to govern this matter. The ugly caterpillar seems like an unpromising candidate for the brilliant career of the butterfly, and it oftentimes happens that students who seem unpromising to some have just the qualities which, with the right time, instruction and experience, will entitle them to great success. It is the little ant who hopes to grow iridescent wings, and who travels through conservatory after conservatory, hoping to find the magic chrysalis that will do this, who is to be pitied. Great success must depend upon special gifts, intellectual as well as vocal. Oh, if we only had some instinct, like that possessed by animals, that would enable us to determine accurately in advance the safest road for us to take, the road that will lead us to the best development of our real talents—not those we imagine we may have or those which the flattery of friends have grafted upon us! Mr. Rumford and I have witnessed so much very hard and very earnest work carried on by students who have no rational basis to hope for success as singers, that we have been placed in the uncomfortable position of advising young singers to seek some other life work.

When to Begin

The eternal question, "At what age shall I commence to study singing?" is always more or less amusing to the experienced singer. If the singer's spirit is in the child, nothing will stop his singing. He will sing from morning until night, and seems to be guided in

most cases by an all-providing Nature that makes its untutored efforts the very best kind of practice. Unless the child is brought into contact with very bad music he is not likely to be injured. Children seem to be trying their best to prove the Darwinian theory by showing us that they can mimic quite as well as monkeys. The average child comes into the better part of his little store of wisdom through mimicry. Naturally if the little vocal student is taken to the vaudeville theatre, where every imaginable vocal law is smashed during a three-hour performance, and if the child observes that the smashing process is followed by the enthusiastic applause of the unthinking audience, it is only reasonable to suppose that the child will discover in this what he believes to be the most approved art of singing.

It is evident then that the first thing which the parent of the musical child should consider is that of teaching him to appreciate what is looked upon as good and what is looked upon as bad. Although many singers with fine voices have appeared in vaudeville, the others must be regarded as "horrible" examples, and the child should know that they are such. On the other hand, it is quite evident that the more good singing that the child hears in the impressionable years of its youth the greater will be the effect upon the mind which is to direct the child's musical future. This is a branch of the vocalist's education which may begin long before the actual lessons. If it is carefully conducted the teacher should have far less difficulty in

starting the child with the actual work. The only possible danger might be that the child's imitative faculty could lead it to extremes of pitch in imitating some singer. Even this is hardly more likely to injure it than the shouting and screaming which often accompanies the play of children.

The actual time of starting must depend upon the individual. It is never too early for him to start in acquiring his musical knowledge. Everything he might learn of music itself, through the study of the piano or any other instrument would all become a part of his capital when he became a singer. Those singers are fortunate whose musical knowledge commenced with the cradle and whose first master was that greatest of all teachers, the mother. Speaking generally, it seems to be the impression of singing teachers that voice students should not commence the vocal side of their studies until they are from sixteen to seventeen years of age. In this connection, consider my own case. My first public appearance with orchestra was when I was fourteen. It was in Bristol, England, and among other things I sang *Ora Pro Nobis* from Gounod's *Workers*.

I was fortunate in having in my first teacher, D. W. Rootham, a man too thoroughly blessed with good British common sense to have any "tricks." He had no fantastic way of doing things, no proprietary methods, that none else in the world was supposed to possess. He listened for the beautiful in my voice and, as his sense of musical appreciation was highly cultivated, he could detect faults, explain them to me and

show me how to overcome them by purely natural methods. The principal part of the process was to make me realize mentally just what was wrong and then what was the more artistic way of doing it.

Letting the Voice Grow

After all, singing is singing, and I am convinced that my master's idea of just letting the voice grow with normal exercise and without excesses in any direction was the best way for me. It was certainly better than hours and hours of theory, interesting to the student of physiology, but often bewildering to the young vocalist. Real singing with real music is immeasurably better than ages of conjecture. It appears that some students spend years in learning how they are going to sing at some glorious day in the future, but it never seems to occur to them that in order to sing they must really use their voices. Of course, I do not mean to infer that the student must omit the necessary preparatory work. Solfeggios, for instance, and scales are extremely useful. Concone, tried and true, gives excellent material for all students. But why spend years in dreaming of theories regarding singing when everyone knows that the theory of singing has been the battleground for innumerable talented writers for centuries? Even now it is apparently impossible to reconcile all the vocal writers, except in so far as they all modestly admit that they have rediscovered the real old Italian school. Perhaps they have. But, admitting that an art teacher rediscovered the actual pigments

used by Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt or Raphael, he would have no little task in creating a student who could duplicate *Mona Lisa*, *The Night Watch* or the *Sistine Madonna*.

After leaving Rootham, I won the four hundred guinea scholarship at the Royal College of Music and studied with Henry Blower. This I followed with a course with Bouhy in Paris and Etelka Gerster in Berlin. Mr. Rumford and I both concur in the opinion that it is necessary for the student who would sing in any foreign language to study in the country in which the language is spoken. In no other way can one get the real atmosphere. The preparatory work may be done in the home country, but if one fails to taste of the musical life of the country in which the songs came into being, there seems to be an indefinable absence of the right flavor. I believe in employing the native tongue for songs in recital work. It seems narrow to me to do otherwise. At the same time, I have always been a champion for songs written originally with English texts, and have sung innumerable times with programs made from English lyrics.

Preparing a Repertoire

The idea that concert and recital work is not as difficult as operatic work has been pretty well exploded by this time. In fact, it is very much more difficult to sing a simple song well in concert than it is to sing some of the elaborate Wagnerian recitatives in which the very complexities of the music make a convenient

hiding place for the artist's vocal shortcomings. In concert everything is concentrated upon the singer. Convention has ever deprived him of the convenient gestures that give ease to the opera singer.

The selection of useful material for concert purposes is immensely difficult. It must have artistic merit, it must have human interest, it must suit the singer, in most cases the piano must be used for accompaniment and the song must not be dependent upon an orchestral accompaniment for its value. It must not be too old, it must not be too far in advance of popular tastes. It is a bad plan to wander indiscriminately about among countless songs, never learning any really well. The student should begin to select numbers with great care, realizing that it is futile to try to do everything. Lord Bolingbroke, in his essay on the shortness of human life, shows how impossible it is for a man to read more than a mere fraction of a great library though he read regularly every day of his life. It is very much the same with music. The resources are so vast and time is so limited that there is no opportunity to learn everything. Far better is it for the vocalist to do a little well than to do much ineffectually.

Good music well executed meets with very much the same appreciation everywhere. During our latest tour we gave almost the very same programs in America as those we have been giving upon the European Continent. The music-loving American public is likely to differ but slightly from that of the great music

centers of the old world. Music has truly become a universal language.

In developing a repertoire the student might look upon the musical public as though it were a huge circle filled with smaller circles, each little circle being a center of interest. One circle might insist upon old English songs, such as the delightful melodies of Arne, Carey, Monroe. Another circle might expect the arias of the old Italian masters, Carissimi, Jomelli, Sacchini or Scarlatti. Another circle would want to hear the German Lieder of such composers as Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, Franz and Wolf. Still another circle might go away disappointed if they could not hear something of the ultra modern writers, such as Strauss, Debussy or even that freak of musical cacophony, Schoenberg. However diverse may be the individual likings of these smaller circles, all of the members of your audience are united in liking music as a whole.

The audience will demand variety in your repertoire but at the same time it will demand certain musical essentials which appeal to all. There is one circle in your audience that I have purposely reserved for separate discussion. That is the great circle of concert goers who are not skilled musicians, who are too frank, too candid, to adopt any of the cant of those social frauds who revel in Reger and Schoenberg, and just because it might stamp them as real connoisseurs, but who really can't recognize much difference between the *Liebestod* of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Rule*

Britannia,—but the music lovers who are too honest to fail to state that they like the *Lost Chord* or the lovely folk songs of your American composer, Stephen Foster. Mr. Plunkett Greene, in his work upon song interpretation, makes no room for the existence of songs of this kind. Indeed, he would cast them all into the discard. This seems to me a huge mistake. Surely we can not say that music is a monopoly of the few who have schooled their ears to enjoy outlandish disonances with delight. Music is perhaps the most universal of all the arts and with the gradual evolution of those who love it, a natural audience is provided for music of the more complicated sort. We learn to like our musical caviar with surprising rapidity. It was only yesterday that we were objecting to the delightful piano pieces of Debussy, who can generate an atmosphere with a single chord just as Murillo could inspire an emotion with a stroke of the brush.

It is not safe to say that you do not like things in this way. I think that even Schoenberg is trying to be true to his muse. We must remember that Haydn, Beethoven, Wagner and Brahms passed through the fire of criticism in their day. The more breadth a singer puts into her work the more likely is she to reap success. Time only can produce the accomplished artist. The best is to find a joy in your work and think of nothing but large success. If you have the gift, triumph will be yours.



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GIUSEPPE CAMPANARI.

GIUSEPPE CAMPANARI

Biographical

Giuseppe Campanari was born at Venice, Italy, Nov. 17th, 1858. His parents were not particularly musical but were very anxious for the boy to become a musician. At the age of nine he commenced to study the piano and later he entered the Conservatory of Milan, making his principal instrument the violoncello. Upon his graduation he secured a position in the 'cello section of the orchestra at "La Scala." Here for years he heard the greatest singers and the greatest operas, gaining a musical insight into the works through an understanding of the scores which has seldom if ever been possessed by a great opera singer. His first appearance as singer was at the Teatro dal Verme in Milan. Owing to voice strain he was obliged to give up singing and in the interim he took a position as a 'cellist in the Boston Symphony Orchestra, remaining with that organization some years. He then made appearances with the Emma Juch Opera Company, the Heinrichs Opera Company, and eventually at the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York, where he achieved his greatest triumphs as leading baritone. Mr. Campanari long since became an American citizen and has devoted his attention to teaching for years.

His conference which follows is particularly interesting, as from the vocal standpoint he is almost entirely self taught.

THE VALUE OF SELF-STUDY IN VOICE TRAINING

GIUSEPPE CAMPANARI

So much has been written upon the futility of applying one method to all cases in vocal instruction that it seems useless for me to say anything that would add to the volume of testimony against the custom of trying to teach all pupils in the same manner. No one man ever has had, has, or ever will have, a "method" superior to all others, for the very simple reason that the means one vocalist might employ to reach artistic success would be quite different from that which another singer, with an entirely different voice, different throat and different intellect, would be obliged to employ. One of the great laws of Nature is the law of variation; that is, no two children of any parents are ever exactly alike. Even in the case of twins there is often a great variation. The great English philosopher, Darwin, made much of this principle. It is one which all voice students and teachers should consider, for although there are, from the nature of things, many foundation principles which must remain the same in all cases, the differences in individual cases are sufficient to demand the greatest keenness of observation, the widest experience and an inexhaustible supply of patience upon the part of the teacher.

Please understand, I am not decrying the use of books of exercises such as those of Concone, Marchesi, Regine, Panofka and others. Such books are necessary. I have used these and others in teaching, suiting the book to the individual case. The pupil needs material of this kind, and it should be chosen with the greatest care and consideration not only of the pupil's voice, but of his intellectual capacity and musical experience. These books should not be considered "methods." They are the common property of all teachers, and most teachers make use of them. My understanding of a "method" is a set of hard and fast rules, usually emanating from the mind of some one person who has the effrontery to pass them off upon an all too gullible public as the one road to a vocal Parnassus. Only the singer with years of experience can realize how ridiculous this course is and how large is the percentage of failure of the pupils of teachers whose sole claim to fame is that they teach the —— method. Proud as I am of the glorious past of vocal art in the country of my birth, I cannot help being amused and at the same time somewhat irritated when I think of the many palpable frauds that are classed under the head of the "Real Old Italian Method" by inexperienced teachers. We cannot depend upon the past in all cases to meet present conditions. The singers of the olden day in Italy were doubtless great, because they possessed naturally fine voices and used them in an unaffected, natural manner. In addition to this they were born speaking a tongue favorable to beauti-

ful singing, led simple lives and had opportunities for hearing the great operas and the great singers unexcelled by those of any other European country. That they became great through the practice of any set of rules or methods is inconceivable. There were great teachers in olden Italy, very great teachers, and some of them made notes upon the means they employed, but I cannot believe that if these teachers were living to-day they would insist upon their ideas being applied to each and every individual case in the same identical manner.

The Value of Opera

This leads us to the subject at hand. The students in Italy in the past have had advantages for self-study that were of greatest importance. On all sides good singing and great singing might be heard conveniently and economically. Opera was and is one of the great national amusements of Italy. Opera houses may be found in all of the larger cities and in most of the smaller ones. The prices of admission are, as a rule, very low. The result is that the boys in the street are often remarkably familiar with some of the best works. Indeed, it would not be extravagant to say that they were quite as familiar with these musical masterpieces as some of the residents of America are with the melodramatic doings of Jesse James or the "Queen of Chinatown." Thus it is that the average Italian boy with a fair education and quick powers of observation reaches his majority with a taste for singing trained by many

opportunities to hear great singers. They have had the best vocal instruction in the world, providing, of course, they have exercised their powers of judgment. Thus it is that it happens that such a singer as Caruso, certainly one of the greatest tenors of all time, could be accidentally heard by a manager while singing and receive an offer for an engagement upon the spot. Caruso's present art, of course, is the result of much training that would fall under the head of "coaching," together with his splendid experience upon the operatic stage itself.

I trust that I have not by this time given the reader of this page the impression that teachers are unnecessary. This is by no means the case. A good teacher is extremely desirable. If you have the good fortune to fall into the hands of a careful, experienced, intelligent teacher, much may be accomplished; but the teacher is by no means all that is required. The teacher should be judged by his pupils, and by nothing else. No matter what he may claim, it is invariably the results of his work (the pupil's) which must determine his value. Teachers come to me with wonderful theories and all imaginable kinds of methods. I always say to them: "Show me a good pupil who has been trained by your methods and I will say that you are a good teacher."

Before our national elections I am asked, "Which one of the candidates do you believe will make the best President?" I always reply, "Wait four years and I will pass my opinion upon the ability of the candidate

the people select." In other words, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating."

Singers Not Born, But Made

We often hear the trite expression, "Singers are born, not made." This, to my mind, is by no means the case. One may be born with the talent and deep love for music, and one may be born with the physical qualifications which lead to the development of a beautiful voice, but the singer is something far more than this. Given a good voice and the love for his music, the singer's work is only begun. He is at the outstart of a road which is beset with all imaginable kinds of obstacles. In my own case I was extremely ambitious to be a singer. Night after night I played 'cello in the orchestra at La Scala, in Milan, always wishing and praying that I might some day be one of the actors in the wonderful world behind the footlights. I listened to the famous singers in the great opera house with the minutest attention, making mental notes of their manner of placing their voices—their method of interpretation, their stage business, and everything that I thought might be of any possible use to me in the career of the singer, which was dearest to my heart. I endeavored to employ all the common sense and good judgment I possessed to determine what was musically and vocally good or otherwise. I was fortunate in having the training of the musician, and also in having the invaluable advantage of becoming acquainted with the orchestral scores of the

famous operas. Finally the long-awaited opportunity came and I made my début at the Teatro dal Verme, in Milan. I had had no real vocal instruction in the commonly accepted sense of the term; but I had really had a kind of instruction that was of inestimable value.

Not Given to All to Study Successfully Without a Teacher

Success brought with it its disadvantages. I foolishly strained my voice through overwork. But this did not discourage me. I realized that many of the greatest singers the world has ever known were among those who had met with disastrous failure at some time in their careers. I came to America and played the violoncello in the Boston Symphony Orchestra. All the time I was practicing with the greatest care and with the sole object of restoring my voice. Finally it came back better than ever and I sang for Maurice Grau, the impresario of the Metropolitan Opera House, in New York. He engaged me and I sang continuously at the Metropolitan for several years. Notwithstanding this varied experience, I will seek to learn, and to learn by practical example, not theory. The only opera school in the world is the opera house itself. No school ever "made" a great singer or a great artist. The most they have done has been to lay the foundation. The making of the artist comes later.

In order to do without instruction one must be very peculiarly constituted. One must be possessed of the

pedagogical faculty to a marked degree. One must have within oneself those qualities for observing and detecting the right means leading to an artistic end which every good teacher possesses. In other words, one must be both teacher and pupil. This is a rare combination, since the power to teach, to impart instruction, is one that is given to very few. It is far better to study alone or not at all than with a poor teacher. The teacher's responsibility, particularly in the case of vocal students, is very great. So very much depends upon it. A poor teacher can do incalculable damage. By poor teachers I refer particularly to those who are carried away by idiotic theories and quack methods. We learn to sing by singing and not by carrying bricks upon our chest or other idiotic antics. Consequently I say that it is better to go all through life with a natural or "green" voice than to undergo the vocal torture that is sometimes palmed off upon the public as voice teaching. At best, all the greatest living teacher can do is to put the artist upon the right track and this in itself is responsibility enough for one man or one woman to assume.

Singers Make their own Methods

As I have already said, most every singer makes a method unto himself. It is all the same in the end. The Chinese may, for instance, have one name for God, the Persians another, the Mohammedans another, and the people of Christian lands another. But the God principle and the worship principle are the same

with all. It is very similar in singing. The means that apply to my own case may apparently be different from those of another, but we are all seeking to produce beautiful tones and interpret the meaning of the composer properly.

One thing, however, the student should seek to possess above all things, and this is a thorough foundation training in music itself. This can not begin too early. In my own home we have always had music. My children have always heard singing and playing and consequently they become critical at a very early age.

I can not help repeating my advice to students who hope to find a vocal education in books or by the even more ridiculous correspondence method. Books may set one's mental machinery in motion and incite one to observe singers more closely, but teach they can not and never can. The sound-reproducing machines are of assistance in helping the student to understand the breathing, phrasing, etc., but there is nothing really to take the place of the living singer who can illustrate with his voice the niceties of placing and *timbre*.

My advice to the voice students of America is to hear great singers. Hear them as many times as possible and consider the money invested as well placed as any you might spend in vocal instruction. The golden magnet, as well as the opportunities in other ways offered artists in America, has attracted the greatest singers of our time to this country. It is no longer necessary to go abroad to listen to great singers. In

no country of the world is opera given with more lavish expenditure of money than in America. The great singers are now by no means confining their efforts to the large Eastern cities. Many of them make regular tours of the country, and students in all parts of this land are offered splendid opportunities for self-help through the means of concerts and musical festivals. After all, the most important thing for any singer is the development of the critical sense. Blind imitation is, of course, bad, but how is the student to progress unless he has had an opportunity to hear the best singers of the day? In my youth I heard continually such artists as La Salle, Gayarre, Patti, De Reszke and others. How could I help profiting by such excellent experiences?

Great Voices are Rare

One may be sure that in these days few, if any, great voices go undiscovered. A remarkable natural voice is so rare that some one is sure to notice it and bring it to the attention of musicians. The trouble is that so many people are so painfully deluded regarding their voices. I have had them come to me with voices that are obviously execrable and still remain unconvinced when I have told them what seemed to me the truth. This business of hearing would-be singers is an unprofitable and an uncomfortable one; and most artists try to avoid the ordeal, although they are always very glad to encourage real talent. Most young singers, however, have little more than the bare ambi-

tion to sing, coupled with what can only be described by the American term, "a swelled head." Someone has told them that they are wonderfully gifted, and persons of this kind are most always ready to swallow flattery indiscriminately. Almost everyone, apparently, wants to go into opera nowadays. To singers who have not any chance whatever I have only to say that the sooner this is discovered the better. Far better put your money in bank and let compound interest do what your voice can not.

ENRICO CARUSO

Biographical

Enrico Caruso was born at Naples, February 25th, 1873. His fondness for music dates from his earliest childhood; and he spent much of his spare money in attending the opera at San Carlo and hearing the foremost singers of his time in many of the rôles in which he appeared later on. His actual study, however, did not start until he was eighteen, when he came under the tuition of Guglielmo Vergine. In 1895 he made his début at the Teatro Cimarosa in *Caserta.* His first appearances drew comparatively little attention to his work and his future greatness was hardly suspected by many of those who heard him. However, by dint of long application to his art he gained more and more recognition. In 1902 he made his début in London. The following year he came to New York, where the world's greatest singers had found an El Dorado for nearly a quarter of a century. There he was at once proclaimed the greatest of all tenors and from that time his success was undeviating. Indeed his voice was so wonderful and so individual that it is difficult to compare him with any of his great predecessors; Tamagno, Campanini, de Reszke and others. In Europe and in America he was welcomed with acclaim and the records of his voice are to be found in thousands of homes of music lovers who have never come in touch with him in any other way. Signor Caruso had a remarkable talent for drawing and for sculpture. His death, August 2d, 1921, ended the career of the greatest male singer of history.



Enrico Caruso.

ITALY, THE HOME OF SONG

ENRICO CARUSO

Opera and the Public in Italy

Anyone who has traveled in Italy must have noticed the interest that is manifested at the opening of the opera season. This does not apply only to the people with means and advanced culture but also to what might be called the general public. In addition to the upper classes, the same class of people in America who would show the wildest enthusiasm over your popular sport, base-ball, would be similarly eager to attend the leading operatic performances in Italy. The opening of the opera is accompanied by an indescribable fervor. It is "in the air." The whole community seems to breathe opera. The children know the leading melodies, and often discuss the features of the performances as they hear their parents tell about them, just as the American small boy retails his father's opinions upon the political struggles of the day or upon the last ball game.

It should not be thought that this does not mean a sacrifice to the masses, for opera is, in a sense, more expensive in Italy than in America; that is, it is more expensive by comparison in most parts of the country. It should be remembered that monetary values in Italy are entirely different from those in America.

The average Italian of moderate means looks upon a lira as a coin far more valuable than its equivalent of twenty cents in United States currency. His income is likely to be limited, and he must spend it with care and wisdom. Again, in the great operatic centers, such as Milan, Naples or Rome, the prices are invariably adjusted to the importance of the production. In first-class productions the prices are often very high from the Italian standpoint. For instance, at La Scala in Milan, when an exceptionally fine performance is given with really great singers, the prices for orchestra chairs may run as high as thirty lira or six dollars a seat. Even to the wealthy Italian this amount seems the same as a much larger amount in America.

To give opera in Italy with the same spectacular effects, the same casts composed almost exclusively of very renowned artists, the same *mise en scene*, etc., would require a price of admission really higher than in America. As a matter of fact, there is no place in the world where such a great number of performances, with so many world-renowned singers, are given as at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. There is no necessity for any one to make a special trip to Europe to hear excellent performances in these days. Of course such a trip would be interesting, as the performances given in many European centers are wonderfully fine, and they would be interesting to hear if only from the standpoint of comparing them with those given at the Metropolitan. However, the most eminent singers of the world come here constantly,

and the performances are directed by the ablest men obtainable, and I am at loss to see why America should not be extremely proud of her operatic advantages. In addition to this the public manifests a most intelligent appreciation of the best in music. It is very agreeable to sing in America, as one is sure that when he does well the public will respond at once.

Italian, the Language of Music

Perhaps the fact that in Italy the audiences may understand the performances better because of their knowledge of their native language may add to the pleasure of opera-going. This, however, is a question, except in the case of some of the more modern works. The older opera librettos left much to be desired from the dramatic and poetic standpoints. Italian after all is the language of music. In fact it is music in itself when properly spoken. Note that I say "when properly spoken." American girls go to Italy to study, and of course desire to acquire a knowledge of the language itself, for they have heard that it is beneficial in singing. They get a mere smattering, and do not make any attempt to secure a perfect accent. The result is about as funny as the efforts of the comedians who imitate German emigrants on the American stage.

If you start the study of Italian, persist until you have really mastered the language. In doing this your ear will get such a drill and such a series of exercises as it has never had before. You will have to listen to the vowel sounds as you have never listened. This is

necessary because in order to understand the grammar of the language you must hear the final vowel in each word and you must hear the consonants distinctly.

There is another peculiar thing about Italian. If the student who has always studied and sung in English, German or French or Russian, attempts to sing in Italian, he is really turning a brilliant searchlight upon his own vocal ability. If he has any faults which have been concealed in his singing in his own language, they will be discovered at once the moment he commences to study in Italian. I do not know whether this is because the Italian of culture has a higher standard of diction in the enunciation of the vowel sounds, or whether the sounds themselves are so pure and smooth that they expose the deficiencies, but it is nevertheless the case. The American girl who studies Italian for six months and then hopes to sing in that language in a manner not likely to disturb the sense of the ridiculous is deceiving herself. It takes years to acquire fluency in a language.

Audiences the Same the World Around

Audiences are as sensitive as individuals. Italy is known as "the home of the opera"; but I find that, as far as manifesting enthusiasm goes, the world is getting pretty much the same. If the public is pleased, it applauds no matter whether it be in Vienna, Paris, Rome, Buenos Aires, New York, or Oshkosh. An artist feels his bond with his audience very quickly. He knows whether his auditors are delighted, whether

they are merely interested or whether they are indifferent a few seconds after he has been upon the stage. I can judge my own work at once by the attitude of the audience. No artist sings exactly alike on two successive nights. That would be impossible. Although every sincere artist tries to do his best at all times, there are, nevertheless, occasions when one sings better than at others. If I sing particularly well the audience is particularly enthusiastic; if I am not feeling well and my singing indicates it, the audience will let me know at once by not being quite so enthusiastic. It is a barometer which is almost unfailing. This is also an important thing for the young singer to consider. Audiences judge by real worth and not by reputation.

Reputation may attract money to the box office, but once the people are inside the opera house the artist must really please them or suffer. Young singers should not be led to think that anything but real worth is of any lasting value. If the audience does not respond, do not blame the audience. It would respond if you could sing so beautifully that you could compel a response that you know should follow real artistic achievement. Don't blame your teacher or your lack of practice or anything or anybody but yourself. The verdict of the audience is better than the examination of a hundred so-called experts. There is something about an audience that makes it seem like a great human individual, whether in Naples or in San Francisco. If you touch the heart or please the

sense of beauty, the appetite for lovely music—common to all mankind—the audience is yours, be it Italian, French, German or American.

Operatic Preparation in Italy

The American student with a really good voice and a really fine vocal and musical training, would have more opportunities for engagements in the smaller Italian opera houses, for the simple reason that there are more of these opera houses and more of these opera companies. Bear in mind, however, that opera in Italy depends to a large extent upon the standing of the artists engaged to put on the opera. In some cities of the smaller size the municipality makes an appropriation, which serves as a guarantee or subsidy. An impresario is informed what operas the community desires and what singers. He tries to comply with the demand. Often the city is very small and the demand very slightly indicated in real money. As a result the performances are comparatively mediocre. The American student sometimes fails to secure engagements with the big companies and tries to gain experience in these small companies. Sometimes he succeeds, but he should remember before undertaking this work that many native Italian singers with really fine voices are looking for similar opportunities and that only a very few stand any chance of reaching really noteworthy success.

Opera will Always Be Expensive

He should, of course, endeavor to seek engagements with the big companies if his voice and ability will warrant it. Where the most money is, there will be the salaried artists and the finest operatic spectacle. That is axiomatic. Opera is expensive and will always be expensive. The supply of unusual voices has always been limited and the services of their possessors have always commanded a high reward. This is based upon an economic law which applies to all things in life. The young singer should realize that, unless he can rise to the very top of his profession, he will be compelled to enlist in a veritable army of singers with little talent and less opportunity.

One thing exists in Italy which is very greatly missed in America. Even in small companies in Italy a great deal of time is spent in rehearsals. In America rehearsals are tremendously expensive and sometimes first performances have suffered thereby. In fact, I doubt whether the public realizes what a very expensive thing opera is. The public has little opportunity to look behind the scenes. It sees only the finished performance, which runs smoothly only when a tremendous amount of mental, physical and financial oil has been poured upon the machinery. I often hear men say here in New York, "I had to pay fifty dollars for my seat to-night." That is absurd—the money is going to speculators instead of into the rightful channels. This money is simply lost as far as doing any

service whatever to art is concerned. It does not go into the opera house treasury to make for better performances, but simply into the hands of some fellow who had been clever enough to deprive the public of its just opportunity to purchase seats. The public seems to have money enough to pay an outrageous amount for seats when necessary. Would it not be better to do away with the speculator at the door and pay say $10.00 for a seat that now costs $7.00? This would mean more rehearsals and better opera and no money donated to the undeserving horde at the portals of the temple.

The Student's Preparation

I am told that many people in America have the impression that my vocal ability is kind of a "God-given" gift; that is, something that has come to me without effort. This is so very absurd that I can hardly believe that sensible people would give it a moment's credence. Every voice is in a sense the result of a development, and this is particularly so in my own case. The marble that comes from the quarries of Carrara may be very beautiful and white and flawless, but it does not shape itself into a work of art without the hand, the heart, and the intellect of the sculptor.

Just to show how utterly ridiculous this popular opinion really is, let me cite the fact that at the age of fifteen everybody who heard me sing pronounced me a bass. When I went to Vergine I studied hard for

four years. During the first three years the work was for the most part moulding and shaping the voice. Then I studied repertoire for one year and made my début. Even with the experience I had had at that time it was unreasonable to expect great success at once. I kept working hard and worked for at least seven years more before any really mentionable success came to me. All the time I had one thing on my mind and that was never to let a day pass without seeing some improvement in my voice. The discouragements were frequent and bitter; but I kept on working and waiting until my long awaited opportunities came in London and in New York. The great thing is, not to stop. Do not think that, because these great cities gave me a flattering reception, my work ceased. Quite on the contrary, I kept on working and am working still. Every time I go upon the stage I am endeavoring to discover something that will make my art more worthy of public acceptance. Every act of each opera is a new lesson.

Different Rôles

It is difficult to invest a rôle with individuality. I have no favorite rôles. I have avoided this, because the moment one adopts a favorite rôle he becomes a specialist and ceases to be an artist. The artist does all rôles equally well. I have had the unique experience of creating many rôles in operas such as *Fedora*, *Adrienne*, *Germania*, *Girl of the Golden West*, *Maschera*. This is a splendid experience, as it always taxes the

inventive faculties of the singing actor. This is particularly the case in the Italian opera of the newer composers, or rather the composers who have worked in Italy since the reformation of Wagner. Whatever may be said, the greatest influence in modern Italian opera is Wagner. Even the great Verdi was induced to change his methods in *Aida*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff*—all representing a much higher art than his earlier operas. However, Wagner did nothing to rob Italy of its natural gift of melody, even though he did institute a reform. He also did not influence such modern composers as Puccini, Mascagni, and Leoncavallo to the extent of marring their native originality and fertility.



Mme. Julia Claussen.

MME. JULIA CLAUSSEN

Biographical

Mme. Julia Claussen was born at Stockholm, Sweden, the land of Jenny Lind and Nilsson. Her voice is a rich, flexible mezzo-soprano, with a range that has enabled her to assume some contralto rôles with more success than the average so-called contralto. In her childhood she studied piano, but did not undertake the serious study of voice until she was eighteen, when she became a student at the Royal Academy of Music, under Professor Lejdstrom (studying harmony and theory under the famous Swedish composer Sjogren). Her début was made at the Royal Opera, at the age of twenty-two, in *La Favorita*, singing the rôle in Swedish. Later she went to Berlin, where she was coached in German opera by Professor Friedrich at the Royal High School of Music. Her American début was made in 1912, in Chicago, where she made an immediate success in such rôles as *Ortrud*, *Brünnhilde* and *Carmen*. She was then engaged at Covent Garden and later sang at the Champs Elysée Theatre, under Nikisch, in Paris. For two years she appeared at the Metropolitan. She has received the rare distinction of being awarded the Jenny Lind Medal from her own government and also of being admitted to the Royal Academy of Sweden, the youngest member ever elected to that august scientific and artistic body. She has also been decorated by King Gustavus V of Sweden with Literis et Artious. In America she has made an immense success as a concert singer.

MODERN ROADS TO VOCAL SUCCESS

MME. JULIA CLAUSSEN

Why Sweden Produces So Many Singers

The question, "Why does Sweden produce so many singers?" is often asked me. First it is a matter of climate, then a matter of physique, and lastly, because the Swedish children do far more singing than any one finds in many other countries. The air in Sweden is very rarefied, clear and exhilarating. Owing to frugal living and abundant systematic exercise, the people become very robust. This is not a matter of one generation or so, but goes back for centuries. The Swedes are a strong, energetic, thorough race; and the same attributes of industry and precision which have made them famous in science are applied to the study of music.

The Swedish child is made to understand that singing is a needful, serious part of his life. His musical training begins very early in the schools, with a definite scheme. All schools have competent, experienced teachers of singing. In my childhood another factor played a very important part. There was never the endless round of attractions, toys, parties, theatres and pastimes (to say nothing of the all-consuming movies). Life was more tranquil and therefore the pursuit of good music was far more enjoyable. American life moves at aeroplane speed. The poor little children

hardly have time to breathe, let alone time to study music. Ragtime is the musical symptom of this American craving for speed and incessant excitement. In a blare and confusion of noises, like bedlam broken loose, what chance has a child to develop good taste? It is admittedly fascinating at times; but is without rhyme, reason or order. I never permit my children to pollute my piano with it. They may have it on the talking machine, but they must not be accomplices in making it.

Of course, things have changed in Sweden, too; and American ragtime, always contagious, has now infected all Europe. This makes the music teacher's task in this day far more difficult than formerly. I hear my daughters practicing, and now and then they seem to be putting a dash of ragtime into Bach. If I stop them I find that "Bach is too slow, I don't like Bach!" This is almost like saying, "I don't like Rubens, Van Dyke or Millet; please, teacher, give me Mutt and Jeff or the Katzenjammer Kids!" American children need to be constantly taught to reverence the great creators of the land. Why, Jenny Lind is looked upon as a great national heroine in Sweden, much as one might regard George Washington in America. Before America can go about musical educational work properly, the teachers must inculcate this spirit, a proper appreciation of what is really beautiful, instead of a kind of wild, mob-like orgy of blare, bang, smash and shriek which so many have come to know as ragtime and jazz.

Self-Criticism

If one should ask me what is the first consideration in becoming a success as a singer, I should say the ability to criticise one's self. In my own case I had a very competent musician as a teacher. He told me that my voice was naturally placed and did very little to help place it according to his own ideas. Perhaps that was well for me, because I knew myself what I was about. He used to say, "That sounds beautiful," but all the time I knew that it sounded terrible. It was then that I learned that my ear must be my best teacher. My teacher, for instance, told me that I would never be able to trill. This was very disheartening; but he really believed, according to his conservative knowledge, that I should never succeed in getting the necessary flexibility.

By chance I happened to meet a celebrated Swedish singer, Mme. Östberg, of the old school. I communicated to her the discouraging news that I could never hope to trill. "Nonsense, my dear," she said, "someone told me that too, but I determined that I was going to learn. I did not know how to go about it exactly, but I knew that with the proper patience and willpower I would succeed. Therefore I worked up to three o'clock one morning, and before I went to bed I was able to trill."

I decided to take Mme. Östberg's advice, and I practiced for several days until I knew that I could trill, and then I went back to my teacher and showed

him what I could do. He had to admit it was a good trill, and he couldn't understand how I had so successfully disproved his theories by accomplishing it. It was then that I learned that the singer can do almost anything within the limits of the voice, if one will only work hard enough. Work is the great producer, and there is no substitute for it. Do not think that I am ungrateful to my teacher. He gave me a splendid musical drilling in all the standard solfeggios, in which he was most precise; and in later years I said to him, "I am not grateful to you for making my voice, but because you did not spoil it."

After having sung a great deal and thought introspectively a great deal about the voice, one naturally begins to form a kind of philosophy regarding it. Of course, breathing exercises are the basis of all good singing methods, but it seems to me that singing teachers ask many of their pupils to do many queer impractical things in breathing, things that "don't work" when the singer is obliged to stand up before a big audience and make everyone hear without straining.

If I were to teach a young girl right at this moment I would simply ask her to take a deep breath and note the expansion at the waist just above the diaphragm. Then I would ask her to say as many words as possible upon that breath, at the same time having the muscles adjacent to the diaphragm to support the breath; that is, to sustain it and not collapse or try to push it up. The trick is to get the most tone, not with the most

breath but with the least breath, and especially the very least possible strain at the throat, which must be kept in a floating, gossamer-like condition all the time. I see girls, who have been to expensive teachers, doing all sorts of wonderful calisthenics with the diaphragm, things that God certainly did not intend us to do in learning to speak and to sing.

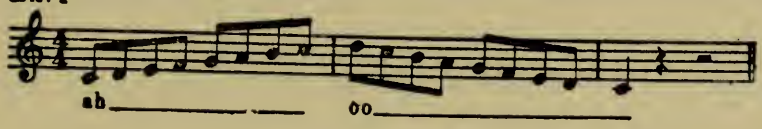
Any attempt to draw in the front walls of the abdomen or the intercostal muscles during singing must put a kind of pneumatic pressure upon the breath stream, which is sure to constrict the throat. Therefore, in my own singing, I note the opposite effect. That is, there is rather a sensation of expansion instead of contraction during the process of expiration. This soon becomes very comfortable, relieves the throat of strain, relieves the tones of breathiness or all idea of forcing. There is none of the ugly heaving of the chest or shoulders; the body is in repose, and the singer has a firm grip upon the tone in the right way. The muscles of the front wall of the abdomen and the muscles between the lower ribs become very strong and equal to any strain, while the throat is free.

In the emission of the actual tone itself I would advise the sensation of inhaling at first. The beginner should blow out the tone. Usually instead of having a lovely floating character, with the impression of control, the tone starts with being forced, and it always remains so. The singer oversings and has nothing in reserve. When I am singing I feel as though the farther away from the throat, the deeper down I can

control the breath stream, the better and freer the tone becomes. Furthermore, I can sing the long, difficult Wagnerian rôles, with their tremendous demands upon the vocal organs, without the least sensation of fatigue. Some singers, after such performances, are "all in." No wonder they lose their voices when they should be in their prime.

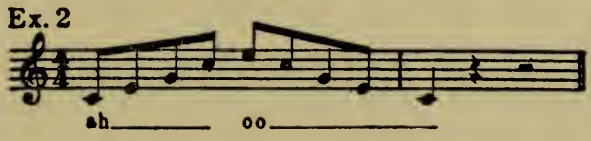
For me the most difficult vowel is "ah." The throat then is most open and the breath stream most difficult to control properly. Therefore I make it a habit to begin my practice with "oo, oh, ah, ay, ee" in succession. I never start with sustained tones. This would give my throat time to stiffen. I employ quick, soft scales, always remembering the basic principle of breath control I have mentioned, and always as though inhaling. This is an example of what I mean. To avoid shrillness on the upper tone I take the highest note with oo and descend with oo.

Ex. 1



The same thought applied to an arpeggio would be

Ex. 2



These I take within comfortable limits of my voice, always remembering that the least strain is a backward step. These exercises are taken through all pos-

sible keys. There can never be too much practice of a scale or arpeggio exercise. Many singers, I know, who wonder why they do not succeed, cannot do a good scale, the very first thing they should be able to do. Every one should be like perfect pearls on a thread.

America's Fatal Ambition

One of the great troubles in America is the irrepressible ambition of both teachers and pupils. Europe is also not untinged with this. Teachers want to show results. Some teachers, I am told, start in with songs at the first or second lesson, with the sad knowledge that if they do not do this they may lose the pupil to some teacher who will peddle out songs. After four or five months I was given an operatic aria; and, of course, I sang it. A year of scales, exercises and solfeggios would have been far more time-saving. The pupils have too much to say about their education in this way. The teacher should be competent and then decide all such questions. American girls do not want this. They expect to step from vocal ignorance to a repertoire over night. When you study voice, you should study not for two years, but realize you will never stop studying, if you wish to keep your voice. Like any others, without exercise, the singing muscles grow weak and inefficient. There are so many, many things to learn.

Of course, my whole training was that of the opera singer, and I was schooled principally in the Wagnerian

rôles. With the coming of the war the prejudice against the greatest anti-imperialist (with the possible exception of Beethoven) which music ever has known —the immortal Wagner—became so strong that not until now has the demand for his operas become so great that they are being resumed with wonderful success. Therefore, with the exception of a few Italian and French rôles, my operatic repertoire went begging.

It was necessary for me to enter the concert field, as the management of the opera company with which I had contracts secured such engagements for me. It was like starting life anew. There is very little opportunity to show one's individuality in opera. One must play the rôle. Therefore I had to learn a repertoire of songs, every one of which required different treatment and different individuality. With eighteen members on the program, the singer has a musical, mental and vocal task which devolves entirely upon herself without the aid of chorus, co-singers, orchestra, costumes, scenery and the glamour of the footlights. It was with the greatest delight that I could fulfill the demands of the concert platform. American musical taste is very exacting. The audiences use their imagination all the time, and like romantic songs with an atmospheric background, which accounts for my great success with songs of such type as Lieurance's *By the Waters of Minnetonka*. One of the greatest tasks I ever have had is that of singing my rôles in many different languages. I learned some of them first in Swedish, then in Italian, then in French, then in German, then in

English; as I am obliged to re-learn my Wagnerian rôles now.

The road to success in voice study, like the road to success in everything else, has one compass which should be a consistent guide, and that is common sense. Avoid extremes; hold fast to your ideals; have faith in your possibilities, and work! work!! work!!!



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CHARLES DALMORES IN MASSENET'S HERODIADE.

CHARLES DALMORES

Biographical

M. Charles Dalmores was born at Nancy, France, December 31st, 1871. His musical education was received at the Nancy Conservatoire under Professor Dauphin, and it was his intention to become a specialist in French horn. He also played the 'cello. When he applied to the Paris Conservatoire he was refused admission to the singing course because "he was too good a musician to waste his time with singing." He became professor of French horn at the Lyons Conservatory; but his love for opera led him to study by himself until he made his début at Rouen in 1899. He then sang at the Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels, Covent Garden, Bayreuth, New York, and Chicago, with ever-increasing success. Dalmores is a dramatic tenor, and his musicianship has enabled him to take extremely difficult rôles of the modern type and achieve real artistic triumphs. He is one of the finest examples of the self-trained vocalist.

SELF-HELP IN VOICE STUDY

CHARLES DALMORES

It is always a pleasure to talk upon self-help and not self-study, because I believe most implicitly in the former and very much doubt the efficacy of the latter in actual voice study. The voice, of all things, demands the assistance of a good teacher, although in the end the results all come from within and not from without. That is, the voice is an organ of expression; and what we make of it depends upon our own thought a thousand times more than what we take in from the outside.

It is the teacher who stimulates the right kind of thinking who is the best teacher. The teacher who seeks to make his pupils parrots rarely meets with success. My whole career is an illustration of this, and when I think of the apparently insurmountable obstacles over which I have been compelled to climb I cannot help feeling that the relation of a few of my own experiences in the way of self-help could not fail to be beneficial.

At the Paris Conservatory

I was born at Nancy on the 31st of December, 1871. I gave evidences of having musical talent and my musical instruction commenced at the age of six years. I studied first at the Conservatory at Nancy, intending

to make a specialty of the violin. Then I had the misfortune of breaking my arm. It was decided thereafter that I had better study the French horn. This I did with much success and attribute my control of the breath at this day very largely to my elementary struggles with that most difficult of instruments. At the age of fourteen I played the second horn at Nancy. Finally, I went, with a purse made up by some citizens of my home town, to enter the great Conservatory at Paris. There I studied very hard and succeeded in winning my goal in the way of receiving the first prize for playing the French horn.

For a time I played under Colonne, and between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three in Paris I played with the Lamoureaux Orchestra. All this time I had my heart set upon becoming a singer and paid particular attention to all of the wonderful orchestral works we rehearsed. The very mention of the fact that I desired to become a singer was met with huge ridicule by my friends, who evidently thought that it was a form of fanaticism. For a time I studied the 'cello and managed to acquire a very creditable technic upon that instrument.

A Discouraging Prospect

Notwithstanding the success I had with the two instruments, I was confronted with the fact that I had before me the life of a poor musician. My salary was low, and there were few, if any, opportunities to increase it outside of my regular work with the orchestra.

I was told that I had great talent, but this never had the effect of swelling my pocketbook. In my military service I played in the band of an infantry regiment; and when I told my companions that I aspired to be a great singer some day they greeted my declaration with howls of laughter, and pointed out the fact that I was already along in years and had an established profession.

At the sedate age of twenty-three I was surprised to find myself appointed Professor of French Horn at the Conservatory of Lyons. Lyons is the second city of France from the standpoint of population. It is a busy manufacturing center, but is rich in architectural, natural and historical interest; and the position had its advantages, although it was away from the great French center, Paris. The opera at Nancy was exceedingly good, and I had an opportunity to go often. Singing and the opera were my life. My father had been manager at Nancy and I had made my first acquaintance with the stage as one of the boys in *Carmen*.

A Test That Failed

I have omitted to say that at Paris I tried to enter the classes for singing. My voice was apparently liked, but I was refused admission upon the basis that I was too good a musician to waste my time in becoming an inferior singer. Goodness gracious! Where is musicianship needed more than in the case of the singer? This amused me, and I resolved to bide my time. I played in opera orchestras whenever I had a

chance, and thus became acquainted with the famous rôles. One eye was on the music and the other was on the stage. During the rests I dreamt of the time when I might become a singer like those over the footlights.

Where there is a will there is usually a way. I taught solfeggio as well as French horn in the Lyons Conservatory. I devised all sorts of "home-made" exercises to improve my voice as I thought best. Some may have done me good, others probably were injurious. I listened to singers and tried to get points from them. Gradually I was unconsciously paving the way for the great opportunity of my life. It came in the form of an experienced teacher, Dauphin, who had been a basso for ten years at the leading theatre of Belgium, fourteen years in London, and later director at Geneva and Lyons. He also received the appointment of Professor at the Lyons Conservatory.

A Famous Opportunity

One day Dauphin heard me singing and inquired who I was. Then he came in the room and said to me, "How much do you get here for teaching and playing?" I replied, proudly, "six thousand francs a year." He said, "You shall study with me and some day you shall earn as much as six thousand francs a month." Dauphin, bless his soul, was wrong. I now earn six thousand francs every night I sing instead of every month.

I could hardly believe that the opportunity I had waited for so long had come. Dauphin had me come to his house and there he told me that my success in

singing would depend quite as much upon my own industry as upon his instruction. Thus one professor in the conservatory taught another in the art he had long sought to master. Notwithstanding Dauphin's confidence in me, all of the other professors thought that I was doing a perfectly insane thing, and did all in their power to prevent me from going to what they thought was my ruin.

Discouraging Advice

Nevertheless, I determined to show them that they were all mistaken. During the first winter I studied no less than six operas, at the same time taking various exercises to improve my voice. During the second winter I mastered one opera every month, and at the same time did all my regular work—studying in my spare hours. At the end of my course I passed the customary examination, receiving the least possible distinction from my colleagues who were still convinced that I was pursuing a course that would end in complete failure.

This brought home the truth that if I was to get ahead at all I would have to depend entirely upon myself. The outlook was certainly not propitious. Nevertheless I studied by myself incessantly and disregarded the remarks of my pessimistic advisers. I sang in a church and also in a big synagogue to keep up my income. All the time I had to put up with the sarcasm of my colleagues who seemed to think, like many others, that the calling of the singer was one demand-

ing little musicianship, and tried to make me see that in giving up the French horn and my conservatory professorship I would be abandoning a dignified career for that of a species of musician who at that time was not supposed to demand any special musical training. Could not a shoemaker or a blacksmith take a few lessons and become a great singer? I, however, determined to become a different kind of a singer. I believed that there was a place for the singer with a thorough musical training, and while I kept up my vocal work amid the rain of irony and derogatory remarks from my mistaken colleagues, I did not fail to keep up my interest in the deeper musical studies. I had a feeling that the more good music I knew the better would be my work in opera. I wish that all singers could see this. Many singers live in a little world all of their own. They know the music of the footlights, but there their experience ends. Every symphony I have played has been molded into my life experience in such a way that it cannot help being reflected in my work.

A Critical Moment

Finally the time came for my début in 1899. It was a most serious occasion for me; for the rest of my career as a singer depended upon it. It was in Rouen, and my fee was to be fifteen hundred francs a month. I thought that that would make me the richest man in the world. It was the custom of the town for the captain of the police to come before the audience at the

end and inquire whether the audience approved of the artist's singing or whether their vocal efforts were unsatisfactory. This was to be determined by a public demonstration. When the captain held up the sign "Approved," I felt as though the greatest moment in my life had arrived. I had worked so long and so hard for success and had been obliged to laugh down so much scorn that you can imagine my feelings. Suddenly a great volume of applause came from the house and I knew in a second what my future should be.

Then it was that I realized that I was only a little way along my journey. I wanted to be the foremost French tenor of my time. I knew that success in France alone, while gratifying, would be limited, so I set out to conquer new worlds. Wagner, up to that time, had never been sung by any French tenor, so I determined to master German and become a Wagner singer. This I did, and it fell to me to receive that most coveted of Wagnerian distinctions, "soloist at Beyreuth," the citadal of the highest in German operatic art. In after years I sang in all parts of Germany with as much success as in France. Later I went to London and then to America, where I sang for many seasons. It has been no small pleasure for me to return to Paris, where I once lived in penury, and to receive the highest fee ever paid to a French singer in the French capital.

The Need For Great Care

I don't know what more I can say upon the subject of self-help for the singer. I have simply told my own story and have related some of the obstacles that I have overcome. I trust that no one who has not a voice really worth while will be misled by what I have had to say. The voice is one of the most intricate and wonderful of the human organs. Properly exercised and cared for, it may be developed to a remarkable degree; but there are cases, of course, where there is not enough voice at the start to warrant the aspirant making the sacrifices that I have made to reach my goal. This is a very serious matter and one which should be determined by responsible judges. At the same time, the singers may see how possible it is for even experienced musicians, like my colleagues in Lyons, to be mistaken. If I had depended upon them and not fought my own way out, I would probably be an obscure teacher in the same old city earning the munificent salary of one hundred dollars a month.

Fighting Your Own Way

The student who has to fight his own way has a much harder battle of it; but he has a satisfaction which certainly does not come to the one who has all his instruction fees and living expenses paid for him. He feels that he has earned his success; and, by the processes of exploration through which the self-help student must invariably pass, he becomes invested with a

confidence and "I know" feeling which is a great asset to him. The main thing is for him to keep busy all the time. He has not a minute to spare upon dreaming. He has no one to carry his burden but himself; and the exercise of carrying it himself is the thing which will do most to make him strong and successful.

The artists who leap into success are very rare. Hundreds who have held mediocre positions come to the front, while those who appear most favored stay in the background. Do not seek to gain eminence by any influence but that of real earnest work; and if you do not intend to work and to work hard, drop all of your aspirations for operatic laurels.



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ANDREAS DIPPEL.

ANDREAS DIPPEL

Biographical

Andreas Dippel was born at Cassel, 1866. His father was a manufacturer who had the boy educated at the local gymnasium, with the view to making him a banker. After five years in a banking house he decided to become a singer and studied with Mme. Zottmayr. Later he went to Berlin, Milan and Vienna, where he studied with Julius Hey, Alberto Leoni and Johann Ress. In 1887 he made his début at Bremen, in *The Flying Dutchman*. He remained with that company until 1892. In the meantime, however, he had appeared at the Metropolitan in New York, with such success that he toured America as a concert singer with Anton Seidl, Arthur Nikisch, and Theodore Thomas. From 1893 to 1898 he was a member of the Imperial Court Opera at Vienna. In 1898 he returned to America to the Metropolitan. In 1908 he was appointed administrative manager of the Metropolitan Company, later becoming the manager of the Philadelphia-Chicago Opera Company. Mr. Dippel is a fine dramatic tenor with the enormous repertoire of 150 works in four different languages. He is a fine actor and has been equally successful in New York, London, and Beyreuth. He also has a repertoire of 60 oratorios.

IF MY DAUGHTER SHOULD STUDY FOR GRAND OPERA

ANDREAS DIPPEL

The training of the girl designed to become a great prima donna is one of the most complex problems imaginable. You ask me to consider the case of an imaginary daughter designed for the career in order to make my opinions seem more pertinent. Very well. If my daughter were studying for grand opera, and if she were a very little girl, I should first watch her very carefully to see whether she manifested any uncontrollable desire or ambition to become a great singer. Without such a desire she will never become great. Usually this ambition becomes evident at a very early age. Then I should realize that the mere desire to become a great singer is only an infinitesimal part of the actual requirements.

She must have, first of all, fine health, abundant vitality and an artistic temperament. She must show signs of being industrious. She should have the patience to wait until real results can be accomplished. In fact, there are so many attributes that it is difficult to enumerate them all. But they are all worth considering seriously. Why? Simply because, if they are not considered, she may be obliged to spend years of labor for which she will receive no return except the most

bitter disappointment conceivable. Of the thousands of girls who study to become prima donnas only a very few can succeed, from the nature of things. The others either abandon their ambitions or assume lesser rôles from little parts down to the chorus.

You will notice that I have said but little about her voice. During her childhood there is very little means of judging of the voice. Some girls' voices that seem very promising when they are children turn out in a most disappointing manner. So you see I would be obliged to consider the other qualifications before I even thought of the voice. Of course, if the child showed no inclination for music or did not have the ability to "hold a tune," I should assume that she was one of those frequent freaks of nature which no amount of musical training can save.

Above all things I should not attempt to force her to take up a career against her own natural inclinations or gifts. The designing mother who desires to have her own ambitions realized in her daughter is the bane of every impresario. With a will power worthy of a Bismarck she maps out a career for the young lady and then attempts to force the child through what she believes to be the proper channels leading to operatic success. She realizes that great singers achieve fame and wealth and she longs to taste of these. It is this, rather than any particular love for her child, that prompts her to fight all obstacles. No amount of advice or persuasion can make her believe that her child cannot become another Tetrazzini, or Garden, or Schumann-

Heink, if only the impresario will give her a chance. In nine cases out of ten Fate and Nature have a conspiracy to keep the particular young lady in the rôle of a stenographer or a dressmaker; and in the battle with Fate and Nature even the most ambitious mother must be defeated.

Her Very Early Training

Once determined that she stood a fair chance of success in the operatic field I should take the greatest possible care of her health, both physically and intellectually. Note that I lay particular stress upon her physical training. It is most important, as no one but the experienced singer can form any idea of what demands are made upon the endurance and strength of the opera singer.

Her general education should be conducted upon the most approved lines. Anything which will develop and expand the mind will be useful to her in later life. The later operatic rôles make far greater demands upon the mentality of the singer than those of other days. The singer is no longer a parrot with little or nothing to do but come before the footlights and sing a few beautiful tones to a few gesticulations. She is expected to act and to understand what she is acting. I would lay great stress upon history—the history of all nations—she should study the manners, the dress, the customs, the traditions, and the thought of different epochs. In order to be at home in *Pelleas and Melisande,* or *Tristan und Isolde,* or *La Bohême* she

must have acquainted her mind with the historical conditions of the time indicated by the composer and librettist.

Her First Musical Training

Her first musical training should be musical. That is, she should be taught how to listen to beautiful music before she ever hears the word technic. She should be taught sight reading, and she ought to be able to read any melody as easily as she would read a book. The earlier this study is commenced with the really musical child, the better. Before it is of any real value to the singer her sight reading should become second nature. She should have lost all idea of the technic of the art and read with ease and naturalness. This is of immense assistance. Then she should study the piano thoroughly. The piano is the door to the music of the opera. The singer who is dependent upon some assistant to play over the piano scores is unfortunate. It is not really necessary for her to learn any of the other instruments; but she should be able to play readily and correctly. It will help her in learning scores, more than anything else. It will also open the door to much other beautiful music which will elevate her taste and ennoble her ideals.

She should go to the opera as frequently as possible in order that she may become acquainted with the great rôles intuitively. If she cannot attend the opera itself she can at least gain an idea of the great operatic music through the talking machines. The "repertory"

of records is now very large, but of course does not include all of the music of all of the scenes.

She should be taught the musical traditions of the different historical musical epochs and the different so-called music schools. First she should study musical history itself and then become acquainted with the music of the different periods. The study of the violin is also an advantage in training the ear to listen for correct intonation; but the violin is by no means absolutely necessary.

Languages

All educators recognize the fact that languages are attained best in childhood. The child's power of mimicry is so wonderful that it acquires a foreign language quite without any suggestion of accent, in a time which will always put their elders to shame. Foreign children, who come to America before the age of ten, speak both their native tongue and English with equal fluency.

The first new language to be taken up should be Italian. Properly spoken, there is no language so mellifluous as Italian. The beautiful quantitative value given to the vowels—the natural quest for euphony and the necessity for accurate pronunciation of the last syllable of a word in order to make the grammatical sense understandable—is a training for both the ear and the voice.

Italy is the land of song; and most of the conductors give their directions in Italian. Not only the usual

musical terms, but also the other directions are denoted in Italian by the orchestral conductors; and if the singer does not understand she must suffer accordingly.

After the study of Italian I would recommend, in order, French and German. If my daughter were studying for opera, I should certainly leave nothing undone until she had mastered Italian, French, German and English. Although she would not have many opportunities to sing in English, under present operatic conditions, the English-speaking people in America, Great Britain, Canada, South Africa, and Australia are great patrons of musical art; and the artist must of course travel in some of these countries.

The Study of the Voice Itself

Her actual voice study should not commence before she is seventeen or eighteen years of age. In the hands of a very skilled and experienced teacher it might commence a little earlier; but it is better to wait until her health becomes more settled and her mature strength develops. At first the greatest care must be taken. The teacher has at best a delicate flower which a little neglect or a little over training may deform or even kill. I can not discuss methods, as that is not pertinent to this conference. There is no one absolutely right way; and many famous singers have traveled what seem quite different roads to reach the same end. However, it is a historic fact that few great singers have ever acquired voices which have had beautiful

quality, perfect flexibility and reliability, who have not sung for some years in the old Italian style. Mind you, I am not referring to an old Italian school of singing here, but more to that class of music adopted by the old Italian composers—a style which permitted few vocal blemishes to go by unnoticed. Most of the great Wagnerian singers have been proficient in coloratura rôles before they undertook the more complicated parts of the great master at Beyreuth.

It is better to leave the study of repertoire until later years; that is, until the study of voice has been pursued for a sufficient time to insure regular progress in the study of repertoire. Personally, I am opposed to those methods which take the student directly to the study of repertoire without any previous vocal drill. The voice, to be valuable to the singer, must be able to stand the wear and tear of many seasons. It is often some years before the young singer is able to achieve real success and the profits come with the later years. A voice that is not carefully drilled and trained, so that the singer knows how to get the most out of it, with the least strain and the least expenditure of effort, will not stand the wear and tear of many years of opera life.

After all, the study of repertoire is the easiest thing. Getting the voice properly trained is the difficult thing. In the study of repertoire the singer often makes the mistake of leaping right into the more difficult rôles. She should start with the simpler rôles; such as those of some of the lesser parts in the old Italian operas.

Then, she may essay the leading rôles of, let us say, *Traviata*, *Barber of Seville*, *Norma*, *Faust*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Carmen*.

Instead of simple rôles, she seems inclined to spend her time upon *Isolde*, *Mimi*, *Elsa* or *Butterfly*. It has become so, that now, when a new singer comes to me and wants to sing *Tosca* or some rôle that the so-called new or *verissimo* Italian school, I almost invariably refuse to listen. I ask them to sing something from *Norma* or *Puritani* or *Dinorah* or *Lucia* in which it is impossible for them to conceal their vocal faults. But no, they want to sing the big aria from the second act of *Madama Butterfly*, which is hardly to be called an aria at all but rather a collection of dramatic phrases. When they are done, I ask them to sing some of the opening phrases from the same rôle, and ere long they discover that they really have nothing which an impresario can purchase. They are without the voice and without the complete knowledge of the parts which they desire to sing.

Then they discover that the impresario knows that the tell-tale pieces are the old arias from old Italian operas. They reveal the voice in its entirety. If the breath control is not right, it becomes evident at once. If the quality is not right, it becomes as plain as the features of the young lady's face. There is no dramatic—emotional—curtain under which to hide these shortcomings. Consequently, knowing what I do, I would insist upon my daughter having a thorough training in the old Italian arias.

Her Training in Acting

Her training in acting would depend largely upon her natural talent. Some children are born actors—natural mimics. They act from their childhood right up to old age. They can learn more in five minutes than others can learn in years. Some seem to require little or no training in the art of acting. As a rule they become the most forceful acting singers. Others improve wonderfully under the direction of a clever teacher.

The new school of opera demands higher histrionic ability from the singer. In fact, we have come to a time when opera is a real drama set to music which is largely recitative and which does not distract from the action of the drama. The librettos of other days were, to say the least, ridiculous. If the music had not had a marvelous hold upon the people they could not have remained in popular favor. To my mind it is an indication of the wonderful power of music that these operas retain their favor. There is something about the melodies which seems to preserve them for all time; and the public is just as anxious to hear them to-day as it was twenty-five and fifty years ago.

Richard Wagner turned the tide of acting in opera by his music dramas. Gluck and von Weber had already made an effort in the right direction; but it remained for the mighty power of Wagner to accomplish the final work. Now we are witnessing the rise of a school of musical dramatic actors such as Garden,

Maurel, Renaud, and others which promises to raise the public taste in this matter and which will add vastly to the pleasure of opera going, as it will make the illusion appear more real.

This also imposes upon the impresario a new contingency which threatens to make opera more and more expensive. Costumes, scenery and all the settings nowadays must be both historically authentic and costly. The collection of wigs, robes, and armor, together with a few sets of scenery, often with the chairs and other furniture actually painted on the scenes, which a few years ago were thought adequate for the equipment of an opera company, have now given way to equipment more elaborate than that of a Belasco or a Henry Irving. Nothing is left undone to make the picture real and beautiful. In fact operatic productions, as now given in America, are as complete and luxurious as any performances given anywhere in the world.

MME. EMMA EAMES

Biographical

Mme. Emma Eames was born at Shanghai, China. Her father, a graduate of Harvard Law School, had been a sea-captain and had been in business in the Chinese city. At the age of five she was brought back to the home of her parents at Bath, Maine. Her mother was an accomplished amateur singer who supervised her early musical training. At sixteen she went to Boston to study with Miss Munger. At nineteen she became a pupil of Marchesi in Paris and remained with the celebrated teacher for two years. At twenty-one she made her début at the Grand Opera in Paris in *Romeo et Juliette*. Two years later she appeared at Covent Garden, London, with such success that she was immediately engaged for the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Few singers ever gained such a strong hold upon the American and English public. Her voice is a fine flexible soprano, capable of doing *Marguerite* or *Elisabeth* equally well. Her husband, Emilio de Gogorza, with whom it is our privilege to present a conference later in this book, is one of the foremost baritones of our time.



Mme. Emma Eames

HOW A GREAT MASTER COACHED OPERA SINGERS

MME. EMMA EAMES

Gounod an Idealist

One does not need to review the works of Charles Gounod to any great extent before discovering that above all things he was an idealist. His whole aspect of life and art was that of a man imbued with a sense of the beautiful and a longing to actualize some noble art purpose. He was of an age of idealists. Coming at the artificial period of the Second Empire, he was influenced by that artistic atmosphere, as were such masters of the brush as Jean August Ingres and Eugène Delacroix. This, however, was unconscious, and in no way affected his perfect sincerity in all he did.

First Meeting with Gounod

I was taken to Gounod by my master, Mme. Mathilde Marchesi, who, perhaps, had some reason to regret her kindness in introducing me, since Gounod did not favor what he conceived as the Italian method of singing. He had a feeling that the Italian school, as he regarded it, was too obvious, and that French taste demanded more sincerity, more subtlety, better balance and a certain finesse which the purely vocal Italian style slightly obscured. Mme. Marchesi was

very irate over Gounod's attitude, which she considered highly insulting; whereas, as a matter of fact, Gounod was doing the only thing that a man of his convictions could do, and that was to tell what he conceived as the truth.

Gounod's study was a room which fitted his character perfectly. His very pronounced religious tendencies were marked by the stained glass windows which cast a delicate golden tint over the little piano he occasionally used when composing. On one side was a pipe organ upon which he was very fond of playing. In fact, the whole atmosphere was that of a chapel, which, together with the beautiful and dignified appearance of the master himself, made an impression that one could not forget. His great sincerity, his lofty aims, his wonderful earnestness, his dramatic intensity, were apparent at once. Many composers are hopelessly disappointing in their appearance, but when one saw Gounod, it was easy to realize whence come the beautiful musical colors which make *Romeo et Juliette*, *Faust* and *The Redemption* so rich and individual. His whole artistic character is revealed in a splendid word of advice he gave to me when I first went to him: "Anyone who is called to any form of musical expression must reveal himself only in the language that God has given him to speak with. Find this language yourself and try, above all things, to be sincere—never singing down to your public."

Gounod had a wonderful power of compelling attention. While one was with him his personality was so

great that it seemed to envelop you, obliterating everything else. This can be attributed not only to magnetism or hypnotism, but also to his own intense, all-burning interest in whatever he was engaged upon. Naturally the relationship of teacher and pupil is different from that of comradeship, but I was impressed that Gounod, even in moments of apparent repose, never seemed to lose that wonderful force which virtually consumed the entire attention of all those who were in his presence.

He had remarkable gifts in painting word-pictures. His imagination was so vigorous that he could make one feel that which he saw in his mind's eye as actually present. I attribute this to the fact that he himself was possessed by the subject at hand and spoke from the fountains of his deepest conviction. First he made you see and then he made you express. He taught one that to convince others one must first be convinced. Indeed, he allowed a great variety of interpretations in order that one might interpret through one's own power of conception rather than through following blindly his own.

During my lessons with Gounod he revealed not only his very pronounced histrionic ability, but also his charming talent as a singer. I had an accompanist who came with me to the lessons and when I was learning the various rôles, Gounod always sang the duets with me. Although he was well along in years, he had a small tenor voice, exquisitely sweet and sympathetic. He sang with delightful ease and with invariably per-

fect diction, and perfect vision. If some of our critics of musical performances were more familiar with the niceties of pronunciation and accentuation of different foreign languages, many of our present-day singers would be called upon to suffer some very severe criticisms. I speak of this because Gounod was most insistent upon correct pronunciation and accent, so that the full meaning of the words might be conveyed to every member of the audience.

A Hearing at the Opera

When I went to the opera for my hearing or *audition*, Gounod went with me and we sang the duets together. The director, M. Gailhard, refused my application, claiming that I was a debutante and could not expect an initial performance at the Grand Opéra despite my ability and musical attainments. It may be interesting for aspiring vocal students to learn something of the various obstacles which still stand in the way of a singer, even after one has had a very thorough training and acquired proficiency which should compel a hearing. Alas! in opera, as in many other lines of human endeavor, there is a political background that is often black with intrigue and machinations. I was determined to fight my way on the merit of my art, and accordingly I was obliged to wait for nearly two years before I was able to make my début. These were years filled with many exasperating circumstances.

I went to Brussels after two years' study with Marchesi, having been promised my début there. I was

kept for months awaiting it and was finally prevented from making an appearance by one who, pretending to be my friend and to be doing all in her power to further my career, was in reality threatening the directors with instant breaking of her contract should I be allowed to appear. I had this on the authority of Mr. Gevaërt, the then director of the Conservatoire and my firm friend. The artist was a great success and her word was law. It was on my return that I was taken to Gounod and I waited a year for a hearing.

Gounod's opera, *Romeo et Juliette*, had been given at the Opéra Comique many times but there was a demand for performances at the Grand Opéra. Accordingly Gounod added a ballet, which fitted it for performance at the Opéra. Apropos of this ballet, Gounod said to me, with no little touch of cynicism, "Now you shall see what kind of music a *Ga Ga* can write" (Ga Ga is the French term for a very old man, that is, a man in his dotage). He was determined that I should be heard at the Grand Opéra as Juliette, but even his influence could not prevent the director from signing an agreement with one he personally preferred, which required that she should have the honor of making her début at the Grand Opéra in the part. Then it was that I became aware that it was not only because I was a debutante that I had been denied. Gounod would not consent to this arrangement, insisting on her making her début previously in *Faust*, and fortunate it was, since the singer in question never attained more than mediocre success. Gounod still demanded

as a compromise that the first six performances of the opera should be given to Adelina Patti, and that they should send for me for the subsequent ones.

In the meantime I was engaged at the Opéra Comique. There Massenet looked with disfavor upon my début before that of Sybil Sanderson. Massenet had brought fortunes to the Opéra Comique through his immensely popular and theatrically effective operas. Consequently his word was law. I waited for some months and no suggestion of an opportunity for a performance presented itself. All the time I was engaged in extending my repertoire and becoming more and more indignant at the treatment I was receiving in not being allowed to sing the operas thus acquired. My year's contract had still three months to run when I received an offer from St. Petersburg. Shortly thereafter I received a note from M. Gailhard announcing that he wished to see me. I went and he informed me that Gounod was still insistent upon my appearance in the rôle of *Juliette*. I was irritated by the whole long train of aggravating circumstances, but said, "Give me the contract, I'll sign it." Then I went directly to the Opéra Comique and asked to see the director. I was towering with indignation—indeed, I felt myself at least seven feet tall and perhaps quite as wide. I demanded my contract. To his "Mais, Mademoiselle—" I commanded, "Send for it." He brought the contract and tore it up in my presence, only to learn next morning to his probable chagrin that I was engaged and announced for an important rôle at the

Grand Opéra. The first performance of a debutante at the Grand Opéra is a great ordeal, and it is easy to imagine that the strain upon a young singer might deprive her of her natural powers of expression. The outcome of mine was most fortuitous and with success behind me I found my road very different indeed. However, if I had not had a friend at court, in the splendid person of Charles Gounod, I might have been obliged to wait years longer, and perhaps never have had an opportunity to appear in Paris, where only a few foreigners in a generation get such a privilege. It is a great one, I consider, as there is no school of good taste and restraint like the French, which is also one where one may acquire the more intellectual qualities in one's work and a sense of proportion and line.

Gounod as a Modernist

I have continually called attention to Gounod's idealism. There are some to-day who might find the works of Gounod artificial in comparison with the works of some very modern writers. To them I can only say that the works of the great master gave a great deal of joy to audiences fully as competent to judge of their artistic and æsthetic beauty as any of the present day. Indeed, their flavor is so delicate and sublimated that the subsequent attempts at interpreting them with more realistic methods only succeeds in destroying their charm.

It may be difficult for some who are saturated with the ultra-modern tendencies in music to look upon

Gounod as a modernist, but thus he was regarded by his own friends. One of my most amusing recollections of Gounod was his telling me—himself much amused thereby—of the first performance of *Faust.* His friends had attended in large numbers to assist at the expected "success," only to be witnesses of a huge failure. Gounod told me that the only numbers to have any success whatsoever were the "Soldiers' Chorus," and that of the old men in the second part of the first act. He said that all his friends avoided him and disappeared or went on the other side of the street. Some of the more intimate told him that he must change his manner of writing as it was so "unmelodious" and "advanced." This seems to me a most interesting recollection, in view of the "cubist" music of Stravinsky and Co. of to-day.

In thinking of Gounod we must not forget his period and his public. We must realize that his operatic heroes and heroines must be approached from an altogether idealistic attitude—never a materialistic one. See the manner in which Gounod has taken Shakespeare's *Juliette* and translated her into an atmosphere of poetry. Nevertheless he constantly intensifies his dramatic situations as the dramatic nature of the composition demands.

His *Juliette,* though consistent with his idea of her throughout, is not the *Juliet* of Shakespeare. As also his *Marguerite* is that of Kaulbach and not the Gretchen of Goethe.

Of course, a great deal depends upon the training

and school of the artist interpreting the rôle. In my own interpretations I am governed by certain art principles which seem very vital indeed to me. The figure of the Mediæval Princess *Elsa* has to be represented with a restraint quite opposed to that of the panting savage *Aïda*. Also, the palpitating, elemental *Tosca* calls for another type of character painting than, for instance, the modest, gestureless, timid and womanly Japanese girl in Mascagni's *Iris*. These things are not taught in schools by teachers. They come only after the prolonged study which every conscientious artist must give to her rôles. Gounod felt this very strongly and impressed it upon me. All music had a meaning to him—an inner meaning which the great mind invariably divines through a kind of artistic intuition difficult to define. I remember his playing to me the last act of *Don Giovanni*, which in his hands gained the grandeur and depth of Greek tragedy. He had in his hands the power to thrill one to the very utmost. Again he was keenly delighted with the most joyous passages in music. He was exceptionally fond of Mozart. *Le Nozze di Figaro* was especially appreciated. He used to say, after accompanying himself in the aria of Cherubino the Page, from the 1st act, "Isn't that Spring? Isn't that youth? Isn't that the joy of life? How marvelously Mozart has crystallized this wonderful exuberant spirit in his music!"

One Reason for Gounod's Eminence

One reason for Gounod's eminence lay in his great reverence for his art. He believed in the cultivation of reverence for one's art, as the religious devotee has reverence for his cult. To Gounod his art was a religion. To use a very expressive colloquialism, "He never felt himself above his job." Time and again we meet men and women who make it a habit to look down upon their work as though they were superior to it. They are continually apologizing to their friends and depreciating their occupation. Such people seem foreordained for failure. If one can not regard the work one is engaged upon with the greatest earnestness and respect—if one can not feel that the work is worthy of one's deepest *reverence*, one can accomplish little. I have seen so much of this with students and aspiring musicians that I feel that I would be missing a big opportunity if I did not emphasize this fine trait in Gounod's character. I know of one man in particular who has been going down and down every year largely because he has never considered anything he has had to do as worthy of his best efforts. He has always been "above his job." If you are dissatisfied with your work, seek out something that you think is really deserving of your labor, something commensurate with your idea of a serious dignified occupation in which you feel that you may do your best work. In most cases, however, it is not a matter of occupation but an attitude of mind—the difference between an earnest

dignified worker and one who finds it more comfortable to evade work. This is true in music as in everything else. If you can make your musical work a cult as Gounod did, if you have talent—vision—ah! how few have vision, how few can really and truly see—if you have the understanding which comes through vision, there is no artistic height which you may not climb.

One can not hope to give a portrait of Gounod in so short an interview. One can only point out a few of his most distinguishing features. One who enjoyed his magnificent friendship can only look upon it as a hallowed memory. After all, Gounod has written himself into his own music and it is to that we must go if we would know his real nature.

MME. FLORENCE EASTON

Biographical

Mme. Florence Easton was born at Middleborough, Yorkshire, England, Oct. 25, 1887. At a very early age she was taken to Toronto, Canada, by her parents, who were both accomplished singers. She was given a musical training in youth with the view of making her a concert pianist. Her teacher was J. A. D. Tripp, and at the age of eleven she appeared in concert. Her vocal talents were discovered and she was sent to the Royal Academy at London, England, where her teachers were Reddy and Mme. Agnes Larkom, a pupil of Garcia. She then went to Paris and studied under Eliot Haslam, an English teacher resident in the French metropolis. She then took small parts in the well-known English Opera organization, the Moody-Manners Company, acquiring a large repertoire in English. With her husband, Francis Maclennen, she came to America to take the leading rôles in the Savage production of *Parsifal*, remaining to sing the next season in *Madama Butterfly*. The couple were then engaged to sing for six years at the Berlin Royal Opera and became wonderfully successful. After three years at Hamburg and two years with the Chicago Opera Company she was engaged for dramatic rôles at the Metropolitan, and has become a great favorite.



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MME. FLORENCE EASTON.

THE OPEN DOOR TO OPERA

MME. FLORENCE EASTON

What is the open door to opera in America? Is there an open door, and if not, how can one be made? Who may go through that door and what are the terms of admission? These are questions which thousands of young American opera aspirants are asking just now.

The prospect of singing at a great opera house is so alluring and the reward in money is often so great that students center their attentions upon the grand prize and are willing to take a chance of winning, even though they know that only one in a very few may succeed and then often at bitter sacrifice.

The question is a most interesting one to me, as I think that I know what the open door to opera in this country might be—what it may be if enough patriotic Americans could be found to cut through the hard walls of materialism, conventionalism and indifference. It lies through the small opera company—the only real and great school which the opera singer of the future can have.

The School of Prime Donne

In European countries there are innumerable small companies capable of giving good opera which the people enjoy quite as thoroughly as the metropolitan

audiences of the world enjoy the opera which commands the best singers of the times. For years these small opera companies have been the training schools of the great singers. Not to have gone through such a school was as damaging an admission as that of not having gone through a college would be to a college professor applying for a new position. Lilli Lehmann, Schumann-Heink, Ruffo, Campanini, Jenny Lind, Patti, all are graduates of these schools of practice.

In America there seems to have existed for years a kind of prejudice, bred of ignorance, against all opera companies except those employing all-star casts in the biggest theatres in the biggest cities. This existed, despite the fact that these secondary opera companies often put on opera that was superior to the best that was to be heard in some Italian, German and French cities which possessed opera companies that stood very high in the estimation of Americans who had never heard them. It was once actually the case that the fact that a singer had once sung in a smaller opera company prevented her from aspiring to sing in a great opera company. America, however, has become very much better informed and much more independent in such matters, and our opera goers are beginning to resemble European audiences in that they let their ears and their common sense determine what is best rather than their prejudices and their conventions regarding reputation. It was actually the case at one time in America that a singer with a great reputation could command a large audience, whereas a singer of

far greater ability and infinitely better voice might be shut out because she had once sung in an opera company not as pretentious as those in the big cities. This seemed very comic indeed to many European singers, who laughed in their coat sleeves over the real situation.

In the first place, the small companies in many cities would provide more singers with opportunities for training and public appearances. The United States now has two or three major opera companies. Count up on your fingers the greatest number of singers who could be accommodated with parts: only once or twice in a decade does the young singer, at the age when the best formative work must be done, have a chance to attain the leading rôles. If we had in America ten or twenty smaller opera companies of real merit, the chances would be greatly multiplied.

The first thing that the singer has to fight is stage fright. No matter how well you may know a rôle in a studio, unless you are a very extraordinary person you are likely to take months in acquiring the stage freedom and ease in working before an audience. There is only one cure for stage fright, and that is to appear continually until it wears off. Many deserving singers have lost their great chances because they have depended upon what they have learned in the studio, only to find that when they went before a great and critical audience their ability was suddenly reduced to 10 per cent. if not to zero. Even after years of practice and experience in great European opera houses where

I appeared repeatedly before royalty, the reputation of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York was so great that at the time I made my début there I was so afflicted by stage fright that my voice was actually reduced to one-half of its force and my other abilities accordingly. This is the truth, and I am glad to have young singers know it as it emphasizes my point.

Imagine what the effect would have been upon a young singer who had never before sung in public on the stage. Footlight paralysis is one of the most terrifying of all acute diseases and there is no cure for it but experience.

The Best Beginning

In the Moody Manners Company in England, the directors wisely understood this situation and prepared for it. All the singers scheduled to take leading rôles (and they were for the most part very young singers, since when the singer became experienced enough she was immediately stolen by companies paying higher salaries) were expected to go for a certain time in the chorus (not to sing, just to walk off and on the stage) until familiar with the situation. Accordingly, my first appearance with the Moody Manners Company was when I walked out with the chorus. I have never heard of this being done deliberately by any other managers, but think how sensible it is!

Again, it is far more advantageous for the young singer to appear in the smaller opera house at first,

so that if any errors are made the opera goers will not be unforgiving. There is no tragedy greater than throwing a young girl into an operatic situation far greater than her experience and ability can meet, and then condemning her for years because she did not rise to the occasion. This has happened many times in recent years. Ambition is a beautiful thing; but when ambition induces one to walk upon a tight rope over Niagara, without having first learned to walk properly on earth, ambition should be restrained. I can recollect several singers who were widely heralded at their first performances by enthusiastic admirers, who are now no longer known. What has become of them? Is it not better to learn the profession of opera singing in its one great school, and learn it so thoroughly that one can advance in the profession, just as one may advance in every other profession? The singer in the small opera company who, night after night, says to herself, "To-morrow it must be better," is the one who will be the Lilli Lehmann, the Galli-Curci, or the Schumann-Heink of to-morrow; not the important person who insists upon postponing her début until she can appear at the Metropolitan or at Covent Garden.

Colonel Henry W. Savage did America an immense service, as did the Aborn Brothers and Fortune Gallo, in helping to create a popular taste for opera presented in a less pretentious form. America needs such companies and needs them badly, not merely to educate the public up to an appreciation of the fact that the finest operatic performances in the world are now

being given at the Metropolitan Opera House, but to help provide us with well-schooled singers for the future.

Necessity of Routine

Nothing can take the place of routine in learning operas. Many, many opera singers I have known seem to be woefully lacking in it. In learning a new opera, I learn all the parts that have anything to do with the part I am expected to sing. In other words, I find it very inadvisable to depend upon cues. There are so many disturbing things constantly occurring on the stage to throw one off one's track. For instance, when I made my first appearance in Mascagni's *Lodoletta* I was obliged to go on with only twenty-four hours' notice, without rehearsal, in an opera I had seen produced only once. I had studied the rôle only two weeks. While on the stage I was so entranced with the wonderful singing of Mr. Caruso that I forgot to come in at the right time. He said to me quickly *sotto voce*—

"Canta! Canta! Canta!"

And my routine drill of the part enabled me to come in without letting the audience know of my error.

The mere matter of getting the voice to go with the orchestra, as well as that of identifying cues heard in the unusual quality of the orchestral instruments (so different from the tone quality of the piano), is most confusing, and only routine can accustom one to being ready to meet all of these strange conditions.

One is supposed to keep an eye on the conductor practically all of the time while singing. The best singers are those who never forget this, but do it so artfully that the audience never suspects. Many singers follow the conductor's baton so conspicuously that they give the appearance of monkeys on a string. This, of course, is highly ludicrous. I don't know of any way of overcoming it but experience. Yes, there is another great help, and that is musicianship. The conductor who knows that an artist is a musician in fact, is immensely relieved and always very appreciative. Singers should learn as much about the technical side of music as possible. Learning to play the violin or the piano, and learning to play it well is invaluable.

Watching for Opportunities

The singer must be ever on the alert for opportunities to advance. This is largely a matter of preparation. If one is capable, the opportunities usually come. I wonder if I may relate a little incident which occurred to me in Germany long before the war. I had been singing in Berlin, when the impresario of the Royal Opera approached me and asked me if I could sing *Aïda* on a following Monday. I realized that if I admitted that I had never sung *Aïda* before, the thoroughgoing, matter-of-fact German Intendant would never even let me have a chance. Emmy Destinn was then the prima donna at the Royal Opera, and had been taken ill. The post was one of the operatic plums of all Europe. Before I knew it, I had said

"Yes, I can sing *Aïda.*" It was a white lie, and once told, I had to live up to it. I had never sung *Aïda*, and only knew part of it. Running home I worked all night long to learn the last act. Over and over the rôle hundreds and hundreds of times I went, until it seemed as though my eyes would drop out of my head. Monday night came, and thanks to my routine experience in smaller companies, I had learned *Aïda* so that I was perfectly confident of it. Imagine the strain, however, when I learned that the Kaiser and the court were to be present. At the end I was called before the Kaiser, who, after warmly complimenting me, gave me the greatly coveted post in his opera house. I do not believe that he ever found out that the little Toronto girl had actually fibbed her way into an opportunity.

Tales of Strauss

Strauss was one of the leading conductors while I was at the Royal Opera and I sang under his baton many, many times. He was a real genius,—in that once his art work was completed, his interest immediately centered upon the next. Once while we were performing *Rosenkavalier* he came behind the scenes and said:

"Will this awfully *long* opera never end? I want to go home." I said to him, "But Doctor, you composed it yourself," and he said, "Yes, but I never meant to conduct it."

Let it be explained that Strauss was an inveterate player of the German card game, Scat, and would far

rather seek a quiet corner with a few choice companions than go through one of his own works night after night. However, whenever the creative instinct was at work he let nothing impede it. I remember seeing him write upon his cuffs (no doubt some passing theme) during a performance of *Meistersinger* he was conducting.

The Singer's Greatest Need

The singer's greatest need, or his greatest asset if he has one, is an honest critic. My husband and I have made it a point never to miss hearing one another sing, no matter how many times we have heard each other sing in a rôle. Sometimes, after a big performance, it is very hard to have to be told about all the things that one did not do well, but that is the only way to improve. There are always many people to tell one the good things, but I feel that the biggest help that I have had through my career has been the help of my husband, because he has always told me the places where I could improve, so that every performance I had something new to think about. An artist never stands still. He either goes forward or backward and, of course, the only way to get to the top is by going forward.

The difficulty in America is in giving the young singers a chance after their voices are placed. If only we could have a number of excellent stock opera companies, even though there had to be a few traveling stars after the manner of the old dramatic companies,

where everybody had to start at the bottom and work his way up, because with a lovely voice, talent and perseverance any one can get to the top if one has a chance to work. By "work" I mean singing as many new rôles as possible and as often as possible and not starting at a big opera house singing perhaps two or three times during a season. Just think of it,—the singer at a small opera house has more chance to learn in two months than the beginner at a big opera house might have in five years. After all, the thing that is most valuable to a singer is time, as with time the voice will diminish in beauty. Getting to the top *via* the big opera house is the work of a lifetime, and the golden tones are gone before one really has an opportunity to do one's best work.



GERALDINE FARRAR.

GERALDINE FARRAR

Biographical

Although one of the youngest of the noted American singers, none has achieved such an extensive international reputation as Miss Farrar. Born February 28, 1882, in Melrose, Mass., she was educated at the public schools in that city. At the school age she became the pupil of Mrs. J. H. Long, in Boston. After studying with several teachers, including Emma Thursby, in New York, and Trabadello, in Paris, she went to Lilli Lehmann in Berlin, and under this, the greatest of dramatic singers of her time, Miss Farrar received a most thorough and careful training in all the elements of her art. She made her début as Marguerite in *Faust* at the Royal Opera in Berlin, October 15th, 1901. Later, after touring European cities with ever increasing successes, she was engaged at the Opera Comique and Grand Opera, Paris, and then at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, where she has been the leading soprano for many seasons. The many enticing offers made for appearances in moving pictures led to a new phase of her career. In many pictures she has appeared with her husband, M. Lou Tellegen, one of the most distinguished actors of the French school, who at one time was the leading man for Sarah Bernhardt.

The following conference is rich in advice to any young woman who desires to know what she must do in order to become a prima donna.

WHAT MUST I GO THROUGH TO BECOME A PRIMA DONNA?

MME. GERALDINE FARRAR

What must I do to become a prima donna? Let us reverse the usual method of discussing the question and begin with the artist upon the stage in a great opera house like the Metropolitan in New York, on a gala night, every seat sold and hundreds standing. It is a modern opera with a "heavy" score. What is the first consideration of the singer?

Primarily, an artist in grand opera must *sing* in some fashion to insure the proper projection of her rôle across the large spaces of the all-too-large auditoriums. Those admirable requisites of clear diction, facial expression and emotional appeal will be sadly hampered unless the medium of sound carries their message. It is only from sad experience that one among many rises superior to some of the disadvantages of our modern opera repertoire. Gone are the days when the facile vocalist was supported by a small group of musicians intent upon a discreet accompaniment for the benefit of the singer's vocal exertions. Voices trained for the older repertoire were not at the mercy of an enlarged orchestra pit, wherein the over-zealous gentlemen now fight—*furioso ad libitum*—for the supremacy of operatic effects.

An amiable musical observer once asked me why we all shouted so in opera. I replied by a question, asking if he had ever made an after-dinner speech. He acquiesced. I asked him how many times he rapped on the table for attention and silence. He admitted it was rather often. I asked him why. He said, so that he might be heard. He answered his own question by conceding that the carrying timbre of a voice cannot compete successfully against even banquet hall festivities unless properly focused out of a normal speaking tone. The difference between a small room and one seating several hundred is far greater than the average auditor realizes. If the mere rattling of silver and china will eclipse this vocal effort in speech I leave to your imagination what must transpire when the singer is called upon to dominate with one thread of song the tremendous onslaught of an orchestra and to rise triumphant above it in a theater so large that the faithful gatherers in the gallery tell me we all look like pigmies, and half the time are barely heard. Since the recesses where we must perform are so exaggerated everything must be in like proportion, hence we are very often too noisy, but how can it be otherwise if we are to influence the eager taxpayer in row X? After all, he has not come to hear us *whisper*, and his point of vantage is not so admirable as if he were sitting at a musical comedy in a small theater. For this condition the size of the theater and the instrumentation imposed by the composer are to be censured, and less blame placed upon the over-

burdened shoulders of the vocal competitor against these odds. Little shading in operatic tone color is possible unless an accompanying phrase permits it or the trumpeter swallows a pin!

Lucia or Zaza

If your repertoire is *The Barber, Lucia, Somnambula* and all such Italian dainties, well and good. Nothing need disturb the complete enjoyment of this lace-work. But if your auditors weep at *Butterfly* and *Zaza* or thrill to *Pagliacci*, they demand you use a quite different technic, which comes to the point of my story.

I believe it was Jean de Reszke who advocated the voice "in the mask" united to breath support from the diaphragm. From personal observation I should say our coloratura charmers lay small emphasis on that highly important factor and use their head voices with a freedom more or less God given. But the power and life-giving quality of this fundamental cannot be too highly estimated for us who must color our phrases to suit modern dramatics and evolve a carrying quality that will not only eliminate the difficulty of vocal demands, but at the same time insure immunity from harmful after-effects. This indispensable twin of the head voice is the dynamo which alone must endure all the necessary fatigue, leaving the actual voice phrases free to float unrestricted with no ignoble distortions or possible signs of distress. Alas! it is not easy to write of this, but the experience of years proves how vital a point is its saving grace and how, unfortunately, it remains an unknown factor to many.

To note two of our finest examples of greatness in this marvelous profession, Lilli Lehmann and Jean de Reszke, neither of whom had phenomenal vocal gifts, I would point out their remarkable mental equipment, unceasing and passionate desire for perfection, paired with an unerring instinct for the noble and distinguished such as has not been found in other exponents of purely vocal virtuosity, with a few rare exceptions, as Melba and Galli-Curci, for instance, to mention two beautiful instruments of our generation.

The singing art is not a casual inspiration and it should never be treated as such. The real artist will have an organized mental strategy just as minute and reliable as any intricate machinery, and will under all circumstances (save complete physical disability) be able to control and dominate her gifts to their fullest extent. This is not learned in a few years within the four walls of a studio, but is the result of a life-time of painstaking care and devotion.

There was a time when ambition and overwork so told upon me that mistakenly I allowed myself to minimize my vocal practice. How wrong that was I found out in short time and I have returned long since to my earlier precepts as taught me by Lilli Lehmann.

Keep the Voice Strong and Flexible

In her book, *How to Sing*, there is much for the student to digest with profit, though possible reservations are advisable, dependent upon one's individual health and vocal resistance. Her strong conviction was, and

is, that a voice requires daily and conscientious exercise to keep it strong and flexible. Having successfully mastered the older Italian rôles as a young singer, her incursion into the later-day dramatic and classic repertoire in no wise became an excuse to let languish the fundamental idea of beautiful sound. How vitally important and admirably *bel canto* sustained by the breath support has served her is readily understood when one remembers that she has outdistanced all the colleagues of her earlier career and now well over sixty, she is as indefatigable in her daily practice as we younger singers should be.

This brief extract about Patti (again quoting Lilli Lehmann) will furnish an interesting comparison:

In Adelina Patti everything was united—the splendid voice paired with great talent for singing, and the long oversight of her studies by her distinguished teacher, Strakosch. She never sang rôles that did not suit her voice; in her earlier years she sang only arias and duets or single solos, never taking part in ensembles. She never sang even her limited repertory when she was indisposed. She never attended rehearsals, but came to the theater in the evening and sang triumphantly, without ever having seen the persons who sang or acted with her. She spared herself rehearsals, which, on the day of the performance or the day before, exhaust all singers because of the excitement of all kinds attending them, and which contribute neither to the freshness of the voice nor to the joy of the profession.

Although she was a Spaniard by birth and an American by early adoption, she was, so to speak, the greatest Italian singer of my time. All was absolutely good, correct and flawless, the voice like a bell that you seemed to hear long after its singing had ceased. Yet she could give no explanation of her art, and answered all her colleagues' questions concerning it with "Ah, je n'en sais rien!" She possessed unconsciously, as a gift of nature, a union of all those qualities that other singers must attain and possess consciously. Her vocal organs stood in the most favorable relations to each other. Her talent and her remarkably trained ear maintained control over the beauty of her singing and her voice. Fortunate circumstances of her life preserved her from all injury. The purity and flawlessness of her tone, the beautiful equalization of her whole voice constituted the magic by which she held her listeners entranced. Moreover, she was beautiful and gracious in appearance. The accent of great dramatic power she did not possess, yet I ascribe this more to her intellectual indolence than to her lack of ability.

But how few of us would ever make a career if we waited for such favors from Nature!

Lessons Must be Adequate

Bearing in mind the absolute necessity and real joy in vocal work, it confounds and amazes me that teachers of this art feel their duty has been accomplished when they donate twenty minutes or half an

hour to a pupil! I do not honestly believe this is a fair exchange, and it is certainly not within reason to believe that within so short a time a pupil can actually benefit by the concentration and instruction so hastily conferred upon her. If this be very plain speaking, it is said with the object to benefit the pupil only, for it is, after all, *they* who must pay the ultimate in success or failure. An hour devoted to the minute needs of one pupil is not too much time to devote to so delicate a subject. An intelligent taskmaster will let his pupil demonstrate ten or fifteen minutes and during the same period of rest will discuss and awaken the pupil's interest from an intelligent point of view, that some degree of individuality may color even the drudgery of the classroom. A word of counsel from such a mistress of song as Lehmann or Sembrich is priceless, but the sums that pour into greedy pockets of vocal mechanics, not to say a harsher word, is a regretable proceeding. Too many mediocrities are making sounds. Too many of the same class are trying to instruct, but, as in politics, the real culprit is the people. As long as the public forbear an intelligent protest in this direction, just so long will the studios be crowded with pathetic seekers for fame. What employment these infatuated individuals enjoyed before the advent of grand opera and the movies became a possible exhaust pipe for their vanity is not clear, but they certainly should be discouraged. New York alone is crowded with aspirants for the stage, and their little bag of tricks is of very slender proportions. Let us do everything in our power to help the really worthy talent; but it is a

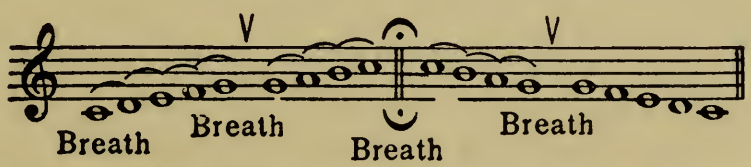
mistaken charity, and not patriotic, to shove singers and composers so called, of American birth, upon a weary public which perceives nothing except the fact that they are of native birth and have no talent to warrant such assumption.

I do not think the musical observers are doing the cause of art in this country a favor when columns are written about the inferior works of the non-gifted. An ambitious effort is all right in its way, but that is no reason to connect the ill-advised production with American hopes. On the contrary, it does us a bad turn. I shall still contend that the English language is not a pretty one for our vocal exploitations, and within my experience of the past ten years I have heard but one American work which I can sincerely say would have given me pleasure to create, that same being Mr. Henry Hadley's recently produced *Cleopatra's Night.* His score is rich and deserving of the highest praise.

In closing I should like to quote again from Mme. Lehmann's book an exercise that would seem to fulfill a long-felt want:

"The great scale is the most necessary exercise for all kinds of voices. It was taught me by my mother. She taught it to all her pupils and to us."

Here is the scale as Lehmann taught it to me.



It was sung upon all the principal vowels. It was extended stepwise through different keys over the en-

tire range of the two octaves of the voice. It was not her advice to practice it too softly, but it was done with all the resonating organs well supported by the diaphragm, the tone in a very supple and elastic "watery" state. She would think nothing of devoting from forty minutes to sixty minutes a day to the slow practice of this exercise. Of course, she would treat what one might call a heavy brunette voice quite differently from a bright blonde voice. These terms of blonde and brunette, of course, have nothing to do with the complexion of the individual, but to the color of the voice.

The Only Cure

Lehmann said of this scale: "It is the only cure for all injuries, and at the same time the most excellent means of fortification against all over-exertion. I sing it every day, often twice, even if I have to sing one of the heaviest rôles in the evening. I can rely absolutely upon its assistance. I often take fifty minutes to go through it once, for I let no tone pass that is lacking in any degree in pitch, power, duration or in single vibration of the propagation form."

Personally I supplement this great scale often with various florid legato phrases of arias selected from the older Italians or Mozart, whereby I can more easily achieve the vocal facility demanded by the tessitura of *Manon* or *Faust* and change to the darker-hued phrases demanded in *Carmen* or *Butterfly*.

But the open secret of all success is patient, never-ending, conscientious *work*, with a forceful emphasis on the *WORK*.



JOHANNA GADSKI.

MME. JOHANNA GADSKI

Biographical

Mme. Gadski was born at Anclam, Prussia, June 15, 1872. Her studies in singing were principally with Mme. Schroeder-Chaloupha. When she was ten years old she sang successfully in concert at Stettin. Her operatic début was made in Berlin, in 1889, in Weber's *Der Freischütz.* She then appeared in the opera houses of Bremen and Mayence. In 1894 Dr. Walter Damrosch organized his opera company in New York and engaged Mme. Gadski for leading rôles. In 1898 she became high dramatic soprano with the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York, and the following year appeared at Covent Garden. She was constantly developing as a singer of Wagner rôles, notably *Brunhilde* and *Isolde.* Her repertoire included forty rôles in all, and the demand for her appearance at festivals here and abroad became more and more insistent. She sang at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York until 1917, when the notoriety caused by the activities of her husband, Captain Hans Tauscher, American agent for large German weapon manufacturers, forced her to resign. Mme. Gadski made a close study of the Schumann Songs for years; and the following can not fail to be of artistic assistance to the singer.

THE MASTER SONGS OF ROBERT SCHUMANN

MME. JOHANNA GADSKI

Robert Schumann's Lyric Gift

One cannot delve very far into the works of Schumann without discovering that his gifts are peculiarly lyric. His melodic fecundity is all the more remarkable because of his strong originality. Even in many of his piano pieces, such as *Warum?*, *Träumerei* or the famous *Slumber Song*, the lyric character is evident. Beautiful melodies which seem to lend themselves to the peculiar requirements of vocal music crop up every now and then in all his works. This is by no means the case with many of the other great masters. In some of Beethoven's songs, for instance, one can never lose sight of the fact that they are instrumental pieces. It was Schumann's particular privilege to be gifted with the acute sense of proportion which enabled him to estimate just what kind of an accompaniment a melody should have. Naturally some of his songs stand out far above others; and in these the music lover and vocal student will notice that there is usually a beautiful artistic balance between the accompaniment and the melody.

Another characteristic is the sense of propriety with which Schumann connected his melodies with the thought of the poems he employed. This is doubtless

due to the extensive literary training he himself enjoyed. It was impossible for a man of Schumann's life experience to apply an inappropriate melody to any given poem. With some song writers, this is by no means the case. The music of one song would fit almost any other set of words having the same poetic metre. Schumann was continually seeking after a distinctive atmosphere, and this it is which gives many of his works their lasting charm.

The Intimate and Delicate Character of Schumann Songs

Most of the greater Schumann songs are of a deliciously intimate and delicate character. By this no one should infer that they are weak or spineless. Schumann was a deep student of psychology and of human life. In the majority of cases he eschewed the melodramatic. It is true that we have at least one song, *The Two Grenadiers*, which is melodramatic in the extreme; but this, according to the greatest judges, is not Schumann at his best. It was the particular delight of Schumann to take some intense little poem and apply to it a musical setting crowded full of deep poetical meaning. Again, he liked to paint musical pastels such as *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*, *Frühlingsnacht* and *Der Nussbaum*. These songs are redolent with the fragrance of out-of-doors. There is not one jarring note. The indefinable beauty and inspiration of the fields and forests have been caught by the master and imprisoned forever in this wonderful music.

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai, which comes from the *Dichterliebe* cycle, is indescribably delicate. It should be sung with great lightness and simplicity. Any effort toward a striving for effect would ruin this exquisite gem. *Frühlingsnacht* with its wonderful accompaniment, which Franz Liszt thought so remarkable that he combined the melody and the accompaniment, with but slight alterations, and made a piano piece of the whole—is a difficult song to sing properly. If the singer does not catch the effervescent character of the song as a whole, the effect is lost. Any "dragging" of the tones destroys the wonderful exuberance which Schumann strove to connote. The balance between the singer and the accompanist must be perfect, and woe be to the singer who tries to sing *Frühlingsnacht* with a lumbering accompanist.

Der Nussbaum is one of the most effective and "thankful" of all the Schumann songs. Experienced public singers almost invariably win popular appreciation with this song. It is probably my favorite of all the Schumann songs. Here again delicacy and simplicity reign supreme. In fact simplicity in interpretation is the great requirement of all the art songs. The amateur singer seems to be continually trying to secure "effect" with these songs and the only result of this is affectation. If amateurs could only realize how hard the really great masters tried to avoid results that were to be secured by the cheap methods of "affectation" and "show," they would make their singing more simple. Success in singing art songs comes through the

ability of the artist to bring out the psychic, poetical and musical meaning of the song. There is no room for cheap vocal virtuosity. The great songs bear the sacred message of the best and finest in art. They represent the conscientious devotion of their composers to their loftiest ideals.

I have mentioned three songs which are representative, but there are numberless other songs which reveal the intimate and personal character of Schumann's works. One popular mistake regarding these songs which is quite prevalent is that of thinking that they can only be sung in tiny rooms and never in large auditoriums. Time and again I have achieved some of the best results I have ever secured on the concert stage with delicate intimate works sung before audiences of thousands of people. The size of the auditorium has practically nothing to do with the song. The method of delivery is everything. If the song is properly and thoughtfully delivered, the audience, though it be one of thousands, will sit "quiet as mice" and listen reverently to the end. However, if one of these songs were to be sung in a flamboyant, bombastic manner, by some singer infected with the idea that in order to impress a multitude of people an exaggerated style is necessary, the results would be ruinous. If overdone, they are never appreciated. Art is art. Rembrandt in one of his master paintings exhibits just the right artistic balance. A copy of the same painting might become a mere daub, with a few twists of some bungling amateur's brush. Let the young singer re-

member that the results that are the most difficult to get in singing the art song are not those by which she may hope to make a sensational impression by means of show, but those which depend first and always upon sincerity, simplicity and a deep study of the real meaning of the masterpiece.

The Love Interest in the Schumann Songs

Up to the time Schumann was thirty years of age (1840), his compositions were confined to works for the piano. These piano works include some of the very greatest and most inspired of his compositions for the instrument. In 1840 Schumann married Clara Wieck, daughter of his former pianoforte teacher. This marriage was accomplished only after the most severe opposition imaginable upon the part of the irate father-in-law, who was loath to see his daughter, whom he had trained to be one of the foremost pianists of her sex, marry an obscure composer. The effect of this opposition was to raise Schumann's affection to the condition of a kind of fanaticism. All this made a pronounced impression upon his art and seemed to make him long for expression through the medium of his love songs. He wrote to a friend at this time, "I am now writing nothing but songs great and small. I can hardly tell you how delightful it is to write for the voice, as compared with instrumental composition; and what a tumult and strife I feel within me as I sit down to it. I have brought forth quite new things in this line." In letters to his wife he is quite as impas-

sioned over his song writing as the following quotations indicate: "Since yesterday morning, I have written twenty-seven pages of music (something new of which I can tell you nothing more than that I have laughed and wept for joy in composing them). When I composed them my soul was within yours. Without such a bride, indeed no one could write such music; once more I have composed so much that it seems almost uncanny. Alas! I cannot help it: I could sing myself to death like a nightingale."

During the first year of his marriage Schumann wrote one hundred of the two hundred and forty-five songs that are attributed to him. In the published collections of his works, there are three songs attributed to Schumann which are known to be from the pen of his talented wife. As in his piano compositions Schumann avoided long pieces and preferred collections of comparatively short pieces, such as those in the *Carnaval*, *Kreisleriana*, *Papillons*, so in his early works for the voice Schumann chose to write short songs which were grouped in the form of cycles. Seven of these cycles are particularly well known. They are here given together with the best known songs from each group.

Cycle	Songs
Liederkreis	*Ich wandelte unter den Bäumen.* *Mit Myrthen und Rosen.*

Cycle	Songs
Myrthen	*Die Lotusblume.*
	Lass mich ihm am Busen hangen.
	Du bist wie eine Blume.
	Der Nussbaum.
Eichendorff Liederkreis	*Waldesgespräch.*
	Frühlingsnacht.
Kerner Cycle	*Wanderlust.*
	Frage.
	Stille Thränen.
Frauenliebe und Leben	*O, Ring an meinem Finger.*
	Er, der Herrlichste von Allen.
Dichterliebe	*Ich grolle nicht.*
	Im wunderschönen Mai.
	Ich hab' im Traum geweinet.
Liebesfrühling	*Three of the songs in this Cycle are attributed to Clara Schumann.*

Critics seem to be agreed that Schumann's talent gradually deteriorated as his mental disease increased. Consequently, with but few exceptions his best song works are to be found among his early vocal compositions. I have tried repeatedly to bring forth some of the lesser known songs of Schumann and have time and again devoted long periods to their study, but

apparently the public, by an unmistakable indication of lack of approval, will have none of them.

Evidently, the songs by which Schumann is now best known are his best works from the standpoint of popular appreciation. Popular approval taken in the aggregate is a mighty determining factor. The survival of the fittest applies to songs as well as to other things in life. This is particularly so in the case of the four famous songs, *Die beiden Grenadiere*, *Widmung*, *Der Nussbaum* and *Ich grolle nicht*, which never seem to diminish in popularity.

Schumann's Love for the Romantic

Schumann's fervid imagination readily led to a love for the romantic. His early fondness for the works of Jean Paul developed into a kind of life tendency, which resulted in winning him the title of the "Tone-Poet of Romanticism." Few of his songs, however, are really dramatic. *Waldesgespräch*, which Robert Franz called a pianoforte piece with a voice part added, is probably the best of Schumann's dramatic-romantic songs. I have always found that audiences are very partial to this song; and it may be sung by a female voice as well as the male voice. The *Two Grenadiers* is strictly a man's song. *Ich grolle nicht*, while sung mostly by men, may, like the *Erl-King* of Schubert, be sung quite as successfully by women singers possessing the qualities of depth and dramatic intensity.

Peculiar Difficulties in Interpreting Schumann Songs

I have already mentioned the necessity for simplicity in connection with the interpretation of the Schumann songs. I need not tell the readers of these pages that the proper interpretation of these songs requires a much more extensive and difficult kind of preparatory work than the more showy coloratura works which to the novice often seem vastly more difficult. The very simplicity of the Schubert and Schumann songs makes them more difficult to sing properly than the works of writers who adopted a somewhat more complicated style. The smallest vocal discrepancies become apparent at once and it is only by the most intense application and great attention to detail that it is possible for the singer to bring her art to a standard that will stand the test of these simple, but very difficult works. Too much coloratura singing is liable to rob the voice of its fullness and is not to be recommended as a preparation for the singer who would become a singer of the modern art songs. This does not mean that scales and arpeggios are to be avoided. In fact the flexibility and control demanded of the singers of art songs are quite as great as that required of the coloratura singer. The student must have her full quota of vocal exercises before she should think of attempting the Schumann Lieder.

Schumann's Popularity in America

Americans seem to be particularly fond of Schumann. When artists are engaged for concert performances it is the custom in this country to present optional programs to the managers of the local concert enterprises. These managers represent all possible kinds of taste. It is the experience of most concert artists that the Schumann selections are almost invariably chosen. This is true of the West as well as of the South and East. One section of the program is without exception devoted to what they call classical songs and by this they mean the best songs rather than the songs whose chief claim is that they are from the old Italian schools of Carissimi, Scarlatti, etc. I make it a special point to present as many songs as possible with English words. The English language is not a difficult language in which to sing; and when the translation coincides with the original I can see no reason why American readers who may not be familiar with a foreign tongue should be denied the privilege of understanding what the song is about. If they do not understand, why sing words at all? Why not vocalize the melodies upon some vowel? Songs, however, were meant to combine poetry and music; and unless the audience has the benefit of understanding both, it has been defrauded of one of its chief delights.

Some German poems, however, are almost untranslatable. It is for this reason that many of the works of Löwe, for instance, have never attained wide popular-

ity. The legends which Löwe employed are often delightful, but the difficulties of translation are such that the original meaning is either marred or destroyed. The songs or ballads of Löwe, without the words, do not seem to grasp American audiences and singers find it a thankless task to try to force them upon the public.

I have been so long in America that I feel it my duty to share in popularizing the works of the many talented American composers. I frequently place MacDowell's beautiful songs on my programs; and the works of many other American composers, including Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, Sidney Homer, Frank Le Forge and others make fine concert numbers. It has seemed to me that America has a large future in the field of lyric composition. American poets have long since won their place in the international Hall of Fame. The lyrical spirit which they have expressed verbally will surely be imbued in the music of American composers. The opportunity is already here. Americans demand the best the world can produce. It makes no difference what the nationality of the composer. However, Americans are first of all patriotic; and the composer who produces real lyric masterpieces is not likely to be asked to wait for fame and competence, as did Schubert and Schumann.



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MME. AMELITA GALLI-CURCI.

MME. AMELITA GALLI-CURCI

Biographical

Mme. Galli-Curci was born at Milan, November 18th, 1889, of a family distinguished in the arts and in the professions. She entered the Milan Conservatory, winning the first prize and diploma in piano playing in 1903. For a time after her graduation she toured as a pianist and then resolved to become a singer. She is practically self-taught in the vocal art. Her début was made in Rome at the Teatro Constanzi, in the rôle of *Gilda* in *Rigoletto*. She was pronouncedly successful from the very start. During the next six years she sang principally in Italy, South America (Three Tours), and in Spain, her success increasing with every appearance. In 1916 she appeared at Chicago with the Chicago Opera Company, creating a furore. The exceptionally beautiful records of her interpretations created an immense demand to hear her in concert, and her successes everywhere have been historic. Not since Patti has there been a singer upon whom such wide-spread critical comment has been made in praise of her exquisite velvety quality of tone, vocal technic and interpretative intelligence. Hailed as "Patti's only successor," she has met with greater popular success in opera and concert than any of the singers of recent years. In 1921 she married the gifted American composer, Homer Samuels, who for many years had been the pianist upon her tours.

TEACHING YOURSELF TO SING

MME. AMELITA GALLI-CURCI

Just what influence heredity may have upon the musical art and upon musicians has, of course, been a much discussed question. In my own case, I was fortunate in having a father who, although engaged in another vocation, was a fine amateur musician. My grandfather was a conductor and my grandmother was an opera singer of distinction in Italy. Like myself, she was a coloratura soprano, and I can recollect with joy her voice and her method of singing. Even at the age of seventy-five her voice was wonderfully well preserved, because she always sang with the greatest ease and with none of the forced throat restrictions which make the work of so many singers insufferable.

My own musical education began at the age of five, when I commenced to play the piano. Meanwhile I sang around the house, and my grandmother used to say in good humor: "Keep it up, my dear; perhaps some day you may be a better singer than I am." My father, however, was more seriously interested in instrumental music, and desired that I should become a pianist. How fortunate for me! Otherwise, I should never have had that thorough musical drill which gave me an acquaintance with the art which I cannot believe could come in any other way. Mascagni was a

very good friend of our family and took a great interest in my playing. He came to our house very frequently, and his advice and inspiration naturally meant much to a young, impressionable girl.

General Education

My general education was very carefully guarded by my father, who sent me to the best schools in Milan, one of which was under the management of Germans, and it was there that I acquired my acquaintance with the German language. I was then sent to the Conservatorio, and graduated with a gold medal as a pianist. This won me some distinction in Italy and enabled me to tour as a pianist. I did not pretend to play the big, exhaustive works, but my programs were made up of such pieces as the *Abeg* of Schumann, studies by Scharwenka, impromptus of Chopin, the four scherzos of Chopin, the first ballade, the nocturnes (the fifth in the book was my favorite) and works of Bach. (Of course, I had been through the Wohltemperites Clavier.) In those days I was very frail, and I had aspired to develop my repertoire so that later I could include the great works for the piano requiring a more or less exhaustive technic of the bravura type.

Once I went to hear Busoni, and after the concert, came to me like a revelation, "You can never be such a pianist as he. Your hand and your physical strength will not permit it." I went home in more or less sadness, knowing that despite the success I had had in my piano playing, my decision was a wise one. Figura-

tively, I closed the lid of my piano upon my career as a pianist and decided to learn how to sing. The memory of my grandmother's voice singing Bellini's *Qui la Voce* was still ringing in my ears with the lovely purity of tone that she possessed. Mascagni called upon us at that time, and I asked him to hear me sing. He did so, and threw up his hands, saying, "Why in the world have you been wasting your time with piano playing when you have a natural voice like that? Such voices are born. Start to work at once to develop your voice." Meanwhile, of course, I had heard a great deal of singing and a great deal of so-called voice teaching. I went to two teachers in Milan, but was so dissatisfied with what I heard from them and from their pupils that I was determined that it would be necessary for me to develop my own voice. Please do not take this as an inference that all vocal teachers are bad or are dispensable. My own case was peculiar. I had been saturated with musical traditions since my babyhood. I had had, in addition, a very fine musical training. Of course, without this I could not have attempted to do what I did in the way of self-training. Nevertheless, it is my firm conviction that unless the student of singing has in his brain and in his soul those powers of judging for himself whether the quality of a tone, the intonation (pitch), the shading, the purity and the resonance are what they should be to insure the highest artistic results, it will be next to impossible for him to secure these. This is what is meant by the phrase—"singers are born and not

made." The power of discrimination, the judgment, etc., must be inherent. No teacher can possibly give them to a pupil, except in an artificial way. That, possibly, is the reason why so many students sing like parrots: because they have the power of mimicry, but nothing comes from within. The fine teacher can, of course, take a fine sense of tonal values, etc., and, provided the student has a really good natural voice, lead him to reveal to himself the ways in which he can use his voice to the best advantage. Add to this a fine musical training, and we have a singer. But no teacher can give to a voice that velvety smoothness, that liquid fluency, that bell-like clarity which the ear of the educated musician expects, and which the public at large demands, unless the student has the power of determining for himself what is good and what is bad.

Four Years of Hard Training

It was no easy matter to give up the gratifying success which attended my pianistic appearances to begin a long term of self-study, self-development. Yet I realized that it would hardly be possible for me to accomplish what I desired in less than four years. Therefore, I worked daily for four years, drilling myself with the greatest care in scales, arpeggios and sustained tones. The colorature facility I seemed to possess naturally, to a certain extent; but I realized that only by hard and patient work would it be possible to have all my runs, trills, etc., so that they always would be smooth, articulate and free—that is,

unrestricted—at any time. I studied the rôles in which I aspired to appear, and attended the opera faithfully to hear fine singing, as well as bad singing.

As the work went on it became more and more enjoyable. I felt that I was upon the right path, and that meant everything. If I had continued as a pianist I could never have been more than a mediocrity, and that I could not have tolerated.

About this time came a crisis in my father's business; it became necessary for me to teach. Accordingly, I took a number of piano pupils and enjoyed that phase of my work very much indeed. I gave lessons for four years, and in my spare time worked with my voice, all by myself, with my friend, the piano. My guiding principles were:

There must be as little consciousness of effort in the throat as possible.

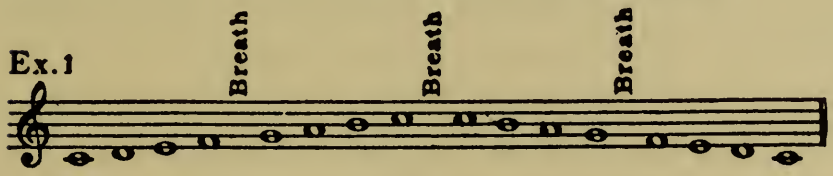
There must always be the Joy of Singing.

Success is based upon sensation, whether it feels right to me in my mouth, in my throat, that I know, and nobody else can tell me.

I remember that my grandmother, who sang *Una voce poco fa* at seventy-five, always cautioned me to never force a single tone. I did not study exercises like those of Concone, Panofka, Bordogni, etc., because they seemed to me a waste of time in my case. I did not require musical knowledge, but needed special drill. I knew where my weak spots were. What was the use of vocal studies which required me to do a

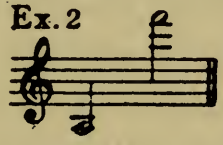
lot of work and only occasionally touched those portions of my voice which needed special attention? Learning a repertoire was a great task in itself, and there was no time to waste upon anything I did not actually need. Because of the natural fluency I have mentioned, I devoted most of my time to slower exercises at first. What could be simpler than this?

Ex. 1



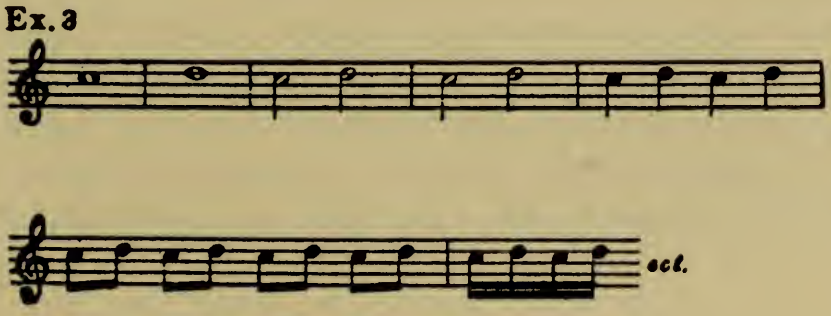
These, of course, were sung in the most convenient range in my voice. The more rapid exercises I took from C to F above the treble staff.

Ex. 2



Even to this day I sing up to high F every day, in order that I may be sure that I have the tones to E below in public work. Another exercise which I used very frequently was this, in the form of a trill. Great care was taken to have the intonation (pitch) absolutely accurate in the rapid passages, as well as in the slow passages.

Ex. 3



When I had reached a certain point, I determined that it might be possible for me to get an engagement. I was then twenty, and my dear mother was horrified at the idea of my going on the stage so young. She was afraid of evil influences. In my own mind I realized that evil was everywhere, in business, society, everywhere, and that if one was to keep out of dirt and come out clean, one must make one's art the object first of all. Art is so great, so all-consuming, that any one with a deep reverence for its beauties, its grandeur, can have but little time for the lower things of life. All that an artist calls for in his soul is to be permitted to work at his best in his art. Then, and then only, is he happiest. Because of my mother's opposition, and because I felt I was strong enough to resist the temptations which she knew I might encounter, I virtually eloped with a copy of *Rigoletto* under my arm and made my way for the Teatro Constanzi, the leading Opera House of Rome.

I might readily have secured letters from influential musical friends, such as Mascagni and others, but I determined that it would be best to secure an engagement upon my own merits, if I could, and then I would know whether or not I was really prepared to make my début, or whether I had better study more. I went to the manager's office and, appealing to his business sense, told him that, as I was a young unknown singer, he could secure my services for little money, and begged for permission to sing for him. I knew he was beset by such requests, but he immediately gave me a hearing,

and I was engaged for one performance of *Rigoletto*. The night of the début came, and I was obliged to sing *Caro Nome* again in response to a vociferous encore. This was followed by other successes, and I was engaged for two years for a South American tour, under the direction of my good friend and adviser, the great operatic director, Mugnone. In South America there was enthusiasm everywhere, but all the time I kept working constantly with my voice, striving to perfect details.

At the end of the South American tour I desired to visit New York and find out what America was like. Because of the war Europe was operatically impossible (it was 1916), but I had not the slightest idea of singing in the United States just then. By merest accident I ran into an American friend (Mr. Thorner) on Broadway. He had heard me sing in Italy, and immediately took me to Maestro Campanini, who was looking then for a coloratura soprano to sing for only two performances in Chicago, as the remainder of his program was filled for the year. This was in the springtime, and it meant that I was to remain in New York until October and November. The opportunity seemed like an unusual accident of fate, and I resolved to stay, studying my own voice all the while to improve it more and more. October and the début in *Rigoletto* came. The applause astounded me; it was electric, like a thunderstorm. No one was more astonished than I. Engagements and offers came from everywhere, but not enough, I hope, to ever induce me not to believe that in

the vocal art one must continually strive for higher and higher goals. Laziness, indifference and lassitude which come with success are the ruin of Art and the artist. The normal healthy artist with the right ideals never reaches his Zenith. If he did, or if he thought he did, his career would come to a sudden end.



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MARY GARDEN.

MARY GARDEN

Biographical

Mary Garden was born February 20th, 1877, in Aberdeen, Scotland. She came to America with her parents when she was eight years of age and was brought up in Chicopee, Massachusetts, Hartford, Connecticut, and Chicago, Illinois. She studied the violin when she was six and the piano when she was twelve. It was the ambition of her parents to make her an instrumental performer. She studied voice with Mrs. S. R. Duff, who in time took her to Paris and placed her under the instruction of Trabadello and Lucien Fugére. Her operatic début was made in Charpentier's *Louise* at the Opera Comique in 1900. Her success was immediate both as an actress and as a singer. She was chosen by Debussy and others for especially intricate rôles. She created the rôle of *Melisande;* also, *Fiammette* in Laroux's *La Reine Fiammette.* In 1907 she made her American début in *Thaïs* at the Manhattan Opera House in New York City. Later she accepted leading rôles with the Philadelphia-Chicago Opera Co. She is considered by many the finest singing actress living—her histrionic gifts being in every way equal to her vocal gifts. In 1921 she was made the manager of the Chicago Opera Company.

THE KNOW HOW IN THE ART OF SINGING

MARY GARDEN

The modern opera singer cannot content herself merely with the "know how" of singing. That is, she must be able to know so much more than the mere elemental facts of voice production that it would take volumes to give an intimation of the real requirements.

The girl who wants to sing in opera must have one thought and one thought only—"what will contribute to my musical, histrionic and artistic success?"

Unless the "career" comes first there is not likely to be any "career."

I wonder if the public ever realizes what this sacrifice means to an artiste—to a woman.

Of course, there are great recompenses—the thrill that comes with artistic triumphs—the sensations that accompany achievement—who but the artist can know what this means—the joy of bringing to life some great masterpiece?

Music manifests itself in children at a very early age. It is very rare indeed that it comes to the surface later in life. I was always musical. Only the media changed—one time it was violin, then piano, then voice. The dolls of my sisters only annoyed me because I could not tolerate dolls. They seemed a waste

of time to me, and when they had paper dolls, I would go into the room when nobody was looking and cut the dolls' heads off. I have never been able to account for my delight in doing this.

My father was musical. He wanted me to be a musician, but he had little thought at first of my being a singer. Accordingly, at eight I was possessed of a fiddle. This meant more to me than all the dolls in the world. Oh, how I loved that violin, which I could make speak just by drawing a bow over it! There was something worth while.

I was only as big as a minute, and, of course, as soon as I could play the routine things of de Beriot, variations and the like, I was considered one of those abominable things, "an infant prodigy."

I was brought out to play for friends and any musical person who could stand it. Then I gave a concert, and my father saw the finger of destiny pointing to my career as a great violinist.

To me the finger of destiny pointed the other way; because I immediately sickened of the violin and dropped it forever. Yes, I could play now if I had to, but you probably wouldn't want to hear me.

Ah, but I do play. I play every time I sing. The violin taught me the need for perfect intonation, fluency in execution, ever so many things.

Then came the piano. Here was a new artistic toy. I worked very hard with it. My sister and I went back to Aberdeen for a season of private school, and I kept up my piano until I could play acceptably many of the

best-known compositions, Grieg, Chopin, etc., being my favorites. I was never a very fine pianist, understand me, but the piano unlocked the doors to thousands of musical treasure houses—admitted me to musical literature through the main gate, and has been of invaluable aid to me in my career. See my fingers, how long and thin they are—of course, I was a capable pianist—long, supple fingers, combined with my musical experience gained in violin playing, made that certain.

Then I dropped the piano. Dropped it at once. Its possibilities stood revealed before me, and they were not to be the limit of my ambitions.

For the girl who hopes to be an operatic "star" there could be nothing better than a good drilling in violin or piano. The girl has no business to sing while she is yet a child—and she is that until she is sixteen or over. Better let her work hard getting a good general education and a good musical education. The voice will keep, and it will be sweeter and fresher if it is not overused in childhood.

Once, with my heart set upon becoming a singer, my father fortunately took me to Mrs. Robinson Duff, of Chicago. To her, my mentor to this day, I owe much of my vocal success. I was very young and very emotional, with a long pigtail down my back. At first the work did not enrapture me, for I could not see the use of spending so much time upon breathing. Now I realize what it did for me.

What should the girl starting singing avoid? First,

let her avoid an incompetent teacher. There are teachers, for instance, who deliberately teach the "stroke of the glottis" (coup de glotte).

What is the stroke of the glottis? The lips of the vocal cords in the larynx are pressed together so that the air becomes compressed behind them and instead of coming out in a steady, unimpeded stream, it causes a kind of explosion. Say the word "up" in the throat very forcibly and you will get the right idea.

This is a most pernicious habit. Somehow, it crept into some phases of vocal teaching, and has remained. It leads to a constant irritation of the throat and ruin to the vocal organs.

When I went to Paris, Mrs. Duff took me to many of the leading vocal teachers of the city, and said, "Now, Mary, I want you to use your own judgment in picking out a teacher, because if you don't like the teacher you will not succeed."

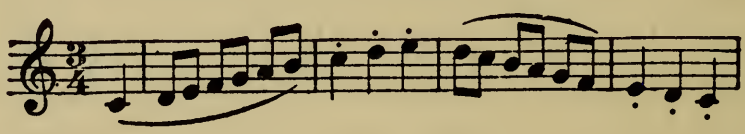
Thus we went around from studio to studio. One asked me to do this—to hum—to make funny, unnatural noises, anything but sing. Finally, Trabadello, now retired to his country home, really asked me to sing in a normal, natural way, not as a freak. I said to myself, "This is the teacher for me." I could not have had a better one.

Look out for teachers with freak methods—ten to one they are making you one of their experiments. There is nothing that any voice teacher has ever found superior to giving simple scales and exercises sung upon the syllables Lah (ah, as in harbor), Leh (eh, as

in they), Lee (ee, as in me). With a good teacher to keep watch over the breathing and the quality, "what more can one have?"

I have always believed in a great many scales and in a great deal of singing florid rôles in Italian. Italian is inimitable for the singer. The dulcet, velvet-like character of the language gives something which nothing else can impart. It does not make any difference whether you purpose singing in French, German, English, Russian or Soudanese, you will gain much from exercising in Italian.

Staccato practice is valuable. Here is an exercise which I take nearly every day of my life:



The staccato must be controlled from the diaphragm, however, and this comes only after a great deal of work.

Three-quarters of an hour a day practice suffices me. I find it injurious to practice too long. But I study for hours. Such a rôle as *Aphrodite* I take quietly and sing it over mentally time and time again without making a sound. I study the harmonies, the nuances, the phrasing, the breathing, so that when the time for singing it comes I know it and do not waste my voice by going over it time and again, as some singers do. In the end I find that I know it better for this kind of study.

The study of acting has been a very personal matter with me. I have never been through any courses of study, such as that given in dramatic schools. This may do for some people, but it would have been impossible for me. There must be technic in all forms of art, but it has always seemed to me that acting was one of the arts in which the individual must make his own technic. I have seen many representatives of the schools of acting here and abroad. Sometimes their performances, based upon technical studies of the art, result in superb acting. Again, their work is altogether indifferent. Technic in acting is more likely to suppress than to inspire. If acting is not inspired, it is nothing. I study the human emotions that would naturally underlie the scene in which I am placed—then I think what one would be most likely to do under such conditions. When the actual time of appearance on the stage arrives, I forget all about this and make myself the person of the rôle.

This is the Italian method rather than the French. There are, to my mind, no greater actors living than Duse and Zacchona, and they are both exponents of the natural method that I employ.

Great acting has always impressed me wonderfully. I went from Paris to London repeatedly to see Beerbohm Tree in his best rôles. Sir Herbert was not always uniformly fine, but he was a great actor and I learned much from watching him. Once I induced Debussy to make the trip to see him act. Debussy was delighted.

Debussy! Ah, what a rare genius—my greatest friend in Art! Everything he wrote we went over together. He was a terribly exacting master. Few people in America realize what a transcendent pianist he was. The piano seemed to be thinking, feeling, vibrating while he was at the keyboard. Time and again we went over his principal works, note for note. Now and then he would stop and clasp his hands over his face in sudden silence, repeating, "It is all wrong—it is all wrong." But he was too good a teacher to let it go at that. He could tell me exactly what was wrong and how to remedy it. When I first sang for him, at the time when they were about to produce *Pelleas and Melisande* at the Opera Comique, I thought that I had not pleased him. But I learned later that he had said to M. Carré, the director: "Don't look for anyone else." From that time he and his family became my close friends. The fatalistic side of our meeting seemed to interest him very much. "To think," he used to say, "that you were born in Aberdeen, Scotland, lived in America all those years and should come to Paris to create my *Melisande!*"

As I have said, Debussy was a gorgeous pianist. He could play with the greatest delicacy and could play in the leonine fashion of Rubinstein. He was familiar with Beethoven, Bach, Handel and the classics, and was devoted to them. Wagner he could not abide. He called him a "griffe papier"—a scribbler. He thought that he had no importance in the world of

music, and to mention Wagner to him was like waving a red flag before a bull.

It is difficult to account for such an opinion. Wagner, to me, is the great tone colorist, the master of orchestral wealth and dramatic intensity. Sometimes I have been so Wagner-hungry that I have not known what to do. For years I went every year to Munich to see the wonderful performances at the Prinzregenten Theater.

In closing let me say that it seems to me a great deal of the failure among young singers is that they are too impatient to acquire the "know how." They want to blossom out on the first night as great prima donnas, without any previous experience. How ridiculous this is! I worked for a whole year at the Opera Comique, at $100 a month, singing such a trying opera as *Louise* two and three times a week. When they raised me to $175 a month I thought that I was rich, and when $400 a month came, my fortune had surely been made! All this time I was gaining precious experience. It could not have come to me in any other way. As I have said, the natural school—the natural school, like that of the Italians—stuffed as it is with glorious red blood instead of the white bones of technic in the misunderstood sense, was the only possible school for me. If our girls would only stop hoping to make a début at $1,000 a night and get down to real hard work, the results would come much quicker and there would be fewer broken hearts.

MME. ALMA GLUCK

Biographical

Mme. Alma Gluck was born at Jassy, Roumania. Her father played the violin, but was not a professional musician. At the age of six she was brought to America. She was taught the piano and sang naturally, but had no idea of becoming a singer. Her vocal training was not begun until she was twenty years of age. Her teacher, at that time, was Signor Buzzi-Peccia, with whom she remained for three years, going directly from his studio to the Metropolitan Opera House of New York. She remained there for three years, when the immense success of her concert work drew her away from opera. She then studied with Jean de Reszke, and later with Mme. Sembrich for four or five years. Since then she has appeared in all parts of the United States with unvarying success. Her records have been among the most popular of any ever issued. Together with her husband, Efrem Zimbalist, the distinguished violinist, she has appeared before immense audiences in joint recitals.



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MME. ALMA GLUCK.

BUILDING A VOCAL REPERTOIRE

ALMA GLUCK

Many seem surprised when I tell them that my vocal training did not begin until I was twenty years of age. It seems to me that it is a very great mistake for any girl to begin the serious study of singing before that age, as the feminine voice, in most instances, is hardly settled until then. Vocal study before that time is likely to be injurious, though some survive it in the hands of very careful and understanding teachers.

The first kind of a repertoire that the student should acquire is a repertoire of solfeggios. I am a great believer in the solfeggio. Using that for a basis, one is assured of acquiring facility and musical accuracy. The experienced listener can tell at once the voice that has had such training. Always remember that musicianship carries one much further than a good natural voice. The voice, even more than the hands, needs a kind of exhaustive technical drill. This is because in this training you are really building the instrument itself. In the piano, one has the instrument complete before he begins; but in the case of the voice, the instrument has to be developed and sometimes *made* by study. When the pupil is practicing, tones grow in volume, richness and fluency.

There are exercises by Bordogni, Concone, Vaccai,

Lamperti, Marchesi, Panofka, Panserson and many others with which I am not familiar, which are marvelously beneficial when intelligently studied. These I sang on the syllable "Ah," and not with the customary syllable names. It has been said that the syllables Do, Re, Mi, Fa, etc., aid one in reading. To my mind, they are often confusing.

Go to the Classics

After a thorough drilling in solfeggios and technical exercises, I would have the student work on the operatic arias of Bellini, Rossini, Donizetti, Verdi, and others. These men knew how to write for the human voice! Their arias are so vocal that the voice develops under them and the student gains vocal assurance. They were written before modern philosophy entered into music—when music was intended for the ear rather than for the mind. I cannot lay too much stress on the importance of using these arias. They are a tonic for the voice, and bring back the elasticity which the more subdued singing of songs taxes.

When one is painting pictures through words, and trying to create atmosphere in songs, so much repression is brought into play that the voice must have a safety-valve, and that one finds in the bravura arias. Here one sings for about fifty bars, "The sky is clouded for me," "I have been betrayed," or "Joy abounds"—the words being simply a vehicle for the ever-moving melody.

When hearing an artist like John McCormack sing a

popular ballad it all seems so easy, but in reality songs of that type are the very hardest to sing and must have back of them years of hard training or they fall to banality. They are far more difficult than the limpid operatic arias, and are actually dangerous for the insufficiently trained voice.

The Lyric Song Repertoire

Then when the student has her voice under complete control, it is safe to take up the lyric repertoire of Mendelssohn, Old English Songs, etc. How simple and charming they are! The works of the lighter French composers, Hahn, Massenet, Chaminade, Gounod, and others. Then Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Löwe, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms. Later the student will continue with Strauss, Wolf, Reger, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Mousorgsky, Borodin and Rachmaninoff. Then the modern French composers, Ravel, Debussy, Georges, Köchlin, Hue, Chausson, and others. I leave French for the last because it is, in many ways, more difficult for an English-speaking person to sing. It is so full of complex and trying vowels that it requires the utmost subtlety to overcome these difficulties and still retain clarity in diction. For that reason the student should have the advice of a native French coach.

When one has traveled this long road, then he is qualified to sing English songs and ballads.

American Songs

In this country we are rich in the quantity of songs rather than in the quality. The singer has to go through hundreds of compositions before he finds one that really says something. Commercialism overwhelms our composers. They approach their work with the question, "Will this go?" The spirit in which a work is conceived is that in which it will be executed. Inspired by the purse rather than the soul, the mercenary side fairly screams in many of the works put out by every-day American publishers. This does not mean that a song should be queer or ugly to be novel or immortal. It means that the sincerity of the art worker must permeate it as naturally as the green leaves break through the dead branches in springtime. Of the vast number of new American composers, there are hardly more than a dozen who seem to approach their work in the proper spirit of artistic reverence.

Art for Art's Sake, a Farce

Nothing annoys me quite so much as the hysterical hypocrites who are forever prating about "art for art's sake." What nonsense! The student who deceives himself into thinking that he is giving his life like an ascetic in the spirit of sacrifice for art is the victim of a deplorable species of egotism. Art for art's sake is just as iniquitous an attitude in its way as art for money's sake. The real artist has no idea

that he is sacrificing himself for art. He does what he does for one reason and one reason only—he can't help doing it. Just as the bird sings or the butterfly soars, because it is his natural characteristic, so the artist works.

Time and again a student will send me an urgent appeal to hear her, saying she is poor and wants my advice as to whether it is worth while to continue her studies. I invariably refuse such requests, saying that if the student could give up her work on my advice she had better give it up without it. One does not study for a goal. One sings because one can't help it! The "goal" nine times out of ten is a mere accident.

Art for art's sake is the mask of studio idlers. The task of acquiring a repertoire in these days, when the vocal literature is so immense, is so overwhelming, that the student with sense will devote all his energies to work, and not imagine himself a martyr to art.

EMILIO DE GOGORZA

Biographical

Emilio Edoardo de Gogorza was born in Brooklyn, New York, May 29th, 1874, of Spanish parents. His boyhood was spent in Spain, France and England. In the last named country he became a boy soprano and sang with much success. Part of his education was received at Oxford. He returned to America, where his vocal teachers were C. Moderati and E. Agramonte. His début was made in 1897 in a concert with Mme. Marcella Sembrich. His rich fluent baritone voice made him a great favorite at musical festivals in America. He has sung with nearly all of the leading American orchestras. The peculiar quality of his voice is especially adapted to record making and his records have been immensely popular. He married Emma Eames, July 13th, 1911.



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EMILIO DE GOGORZA.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG CONCERT SINGERS

EMILIO DE GOGORZA

There has never been a time or a country presenting more inviting opportunities to the concert and the oratorio singer than the America of to-day. As a corollary to this statement there is the obvious fact that the American public, taken as a whole, is now the most discriminating public to be found anywhere in the world. Every concert is adequately reviewed by able writers; and singers are continually on their mettle. It therefore follows that while there are opportunities for concert and oratorio singers, there is no room for the inefficient, the talentless, brainless aspirants who imagine that a great vocal career awaits them simply because they have a few good tones and a pleasing stage presence.

This is the age of the brain. In singing, the voice is only a detail. It is the mentality, the artistic feeling, the skill in interpretation that counts. Some of the greatest artists are vocally inferior to singers of lesser reputation. Why? Because they read, because they study, because they broaden their intellects and extend their culture until their appreciation of the beautiful is so comprehensive that every degree of human emotion may be effectively portrayed. In a word they

become artists. Take the case of Victor Maurel, for instance. If he were ninety years old and had only the shred of a voice but still retained his artistic grasp, I would rather hear him than any living singer. I have learned more from hearing him sing than from any other singer. Verdi chose him to sing in *Otello* against the advice of several friends, saying: "He has more brain than any five singers I know."

Some people imagine that when an artist is embarked upon his professional work study ceases. It is a great mistake. No one works harder than I do to broaden my culture and interpretative skill. I am constantly studying and trust that I may never cease. The greater the artist the more incessant the study. It is one of the secrets of large success.

Special Study Required for Concert Singing

People imagine that the opera requires a higher kind of vocal preparation than the concert or oratorio stage. This is also a great misconception. The operatic singers who have been successful as concert singers at once admit that concert singing is much more difficult. Comparatively few opera singers succeed as concert singers. Why? Because in opera the voice needs to be concentrated and more or less uniform. An opera house is really two buildings, the auditorium and the stage. The stage with its tall scene-loft is frequently as large from the standpoint of cubic feet as the auditorium. Sometimes it is larger. To fill these two immense buildings the voice must be strong and con-

tinually concentrated, *dans le Masque.* The delicate little effects that the concert singer is obliged to produce would not be heard over the footlights. In order to retain interest without the assistance of scenery and action the concert singer's interpretative work must be marked by an attention to details that the opera singer rarely considers. The voice, therefore, requires a different treatment. It must be so finely trained that it becomes susceptible to the most delicate change of thought in the singer's mind. This demands a really enormous amount of work.

The successful concert singer must also have an endurance that enables her to undergo strains that the opera singer rarely knows. The grand opera singer in the great opera houses of the world rarely sings more than two or three times a week. The concert singer is often obliged to sing every night for weeks. They must learn how to relax and save the voice at all times, otherwise they will lose elasticity and sweetness.

A young woman vocal student, with talent, a good natural voice, intelligence, industry, sufficient practice time, a high school education, and a knowledge of the rudiments of music, might complete a course of study leading to a successful concert début in three years. More frequently four or five years may be required. With a bungling teacher she may spend six or seven. The cost of her instruction, with a good teacher in a great metropolis, will be more per year than if she went to almost any one of the leading universities admitting women. She will have to work harder than if

she took a regular college course. Progress depends upon the individual. One girl will accomplish more in two years than another will accomplish in five years. Again, the rate of progress depends upon personal development. Sometimes a course of study with a good teacher will awaken a latent energy and mental condition that will enable the student to make great strides.

My most important work has been done by self-study with the assistance and advice of many singers and teachers who have been my friends. No pupil who depends entirely upon a teacher will succeed. She must work out her own salvation. It is the private thought, incessant effort and individual attitude that lead to success.

Study in Your Home Country

I honestly believe that the young vocal student can do far better by studying in America than by studying abroad. European residence and travel are very desirable, but the study may be done to better advantage right here in our own country. Americans want the best and they get it. In Europe they have no conception whatever of the extent of musical culture in America. It is a continual source of amazement to me. In the West and Northwest I find audiences just as intelligent and as appreciative as in Boston. There is the greatest imaginable catholicity of taste. Just at present the tendency is away from the old German classics and is leading to the modern works of French,

German and American composers. Still I find that I can sing a song like Schumann's "Widmung" in Western cities that only a few years ago were mere collections of frontier huts and shacks, and discover that the genius of Schumann is just as potent there as in New York City. I have recently been all over Europe, and I have seen no such condition anywhere as that I have just described. It is especially gratifying to note in America a tremendous demand for the best vocal works of the American composers.

The young concert singer must have a very comprehensive repertoire. Every new work properly mastered is an asset. In oratorio she should first of all learn those works that are most in demand, like the *Messiah*, the *Elijah*, the *Creation* and the *Redemption*. Then attention may be given to the modern works and works more rarely performed, like those of Elgar, Perosi and others. After the young singer has proven her worth with the public she may expect an income of from $10,000.00 to $15,000.00 a year. That is what our first-class singers have received for high-class concert work. Some European prima donnas like Schumann-Heink and others have commanded much higher figures.

You ask me what influence the sound reproducing machines have had upon the demand for good vocal music in America. They have unquestionably increased the demand very greatly. They have even been known to make reputations for singers entirely without any other road to publicity. Take the case of

Madame Michaelowa, a Russian prima donna who has never visited America. Thousands of records of her voice have been sold in America, and now the demand for her appearance in this country has been so great that she has been offered huge sums for an American tour. I believe that if used intelligently the sound reproducing machine may become a great help to the teacher and student. It is used in many of the great opera houses of the world as an aid in determining the engagement of new singers who cannot be personally heard. Some of the records of my own voice have been so excellent that they seem positively uncanny to me when I hear them reproduced.

I have no patent exercises to offer to singing students. There are a thousand ways of learning to breathe properly and they all lead to one end. Breathing may best be studied when it is made coincident with the requirements of singing. I have no fantastic technical studies to offer. My daily work simply consists of scales, arpeggios and the simplest kind of exercises, the simpler the better. I always make it a point to commence practicing very softly, slowly and surely. I never sing notes outside my most comfortable range at the start. Taking notes too high or too low is an extremely bad plan at first. Many young students make this fault. They also sing much too loud. The voice should be exercised for some considerable time on soft exercises before loud notes are even attempted. It is precisely the same as with physical exercises. The athlete who exerts himself to his fullest extent at first

is working toward ultimate exhaustion. I have known students who sang "at the top of their lungs" and called it practice. The next day they grew hoarse and wondered why the hoarseness came.

Never Sing When Tired

Never sing when out of sorts, tired or when the throat is sore. It is all very well to try to throw such a condition off as if it were a state of mind. My advice is, DON'T. I have known singers to try to sing off a sore throat and secure as a result a loss of voice for several days.

Our American climate is very bad for singers. The dust of our manufacturing cities gets in the throat and irritates it badly. The noise is very nerve racking, and I have a theory that the electricity in the air is injurious.

As I have said, the chances in the concert and operatic field are unlimited for those who deserve to be there. Don't be misled. Thousands of people are trying to become concert and oratorio singers who have not talent, temperament, magnetism, the right kind of intelligence nor the true musical feeling. It is pitiful to watch them. They are often deluded by teachers who are biased by pecuniary necessity. It is safe to say that at the end of a year's good instruction the teacher may safely tell what the pupil's chances are. Some teachers are brutally frank. Their opinions are worth those of a thousand teachers who consider their own interests first. Secure the opinions of as

many artists as possible before you determine upon a professional career. The artist is not biased. He does not want you for a pupil and has nothing to gain in praising you. If he gives you an unfavorable report, thank him, because he is probably thinking of your best interests.

As I have said, progress depends upon the individual. One man can go into a steel foundry and learn more in two years than another can in five. If you do not become conscious of audible results at the end of one or two years' study do some serious thinking. You are either on the wrong track or you have not the natural qualifications which lead to success on the concert and oratorio stage.



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MME. FRIEDA HEMPEL.

FRIEDA HEMPEL

Biographical

Frieda Hempel was born at Leipzig, June 26, 1885. She studied piano for a considerable time at the Leipzig Conservatory and the Stern Conservatory. Later she studied singing with Mme. Nicklass Kempner, to whom she is indebted for her entire vocal education up to the time of her début in opera. Her first appearance was in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, at the Royal Opera in Berlin. After many very successful appearances in leadi ng European Opera Houses she was engaged for the Metropolitan Opera House in New York where she immediately became very popular in stellar rôles. Her repertoire runs from the *Marriage of Figaro* to *Die Meistersinger*. Her voice is a clear, pure, sweet soprano; and, like Mme. Sembrich and Mme. Galli-Curci, she clearly shows the value of her instrumental training in the accuracy, precision and clarity of her coloratura work. She has made many successful concert tours of the United States. In addition to being a brilliant singer she is an excellent actress. She is now an American citizen and the wife of an American business man.

THOROUGHNESS IN VOCAL PREPARATION

MME. FRIEDA HEMPEL

Why Some Succeed and Some Fail

In every thousand girls who aspire to Grand Opera probably not more than one ever succeeds. This is by no means because of lack of good voices. There are great numbers of good voices; although many girls who want to be opera singers either deceive themselves or are deceived by others (often charlatan teachers) into believing that they have fine natural voices when they have not. There is nothing more glorious than a beautiful human voice—a voice strong, resonant, if necessary, but velvety and luscious if needs be. There are many girls with really beautiful natural voices who have lost their chances in Grand Opera largely because they have either not had the personal persistence necessary to carry them to the point where their services are in demand by the public or they have had the misfortune not to have the right kind of a vocal or musical drill master—a really good teacher.

Teachers in these days waste a fearful amount of time in what they consider to be their methods. They tell you to sing in the back, or on the side or through the mask or what not, instead of getting right down to the real work. My teacher in Berlin, at the Con-

servatory, insisted first of all upon having me sing tones and scales—mostly long sustained tones—for at least one entire year. These were sung very softly, very evenly, until I could employ every tone in my voice with sureness and certainty. I don't see how it could possibly have been accomplished in less time. Try that on the American girl and she will think that she is being cheated out of something. Why should she wait a whole year with silly tones when she knows that she can sing a great aria with only a little more difficulty?

The basis of all fine singing, whether in the opera house or on the concert stage, is a good legato. My teacher (Nicklass Kempner) was very insistent upon this. In working with such studies as those of Concone, Bordogni, Lütgen, Marchesi or Garcia—the best part of the attention of the teacher was given to the simple yet difficult matter of a beautiful legato. After one has been through a mass of such material, the matter of legato singing becomes more or less automatic. The tendency to slide from one tone to another is done away with. The connection between one tone and another in good legato is so clean, so free from blurs that there is nothing to compare it with. One tone takes the place of another just as though one coin or disk were placed directly on top of another without any of the edges showing. The change is instantaneous and imperceptible. If one were to gradually slide one coin over another coin you would have a graphic illustration of what most

people think is legato. The result is that they sound like steam sirens, never quite definitely upon any tone of the scale.

A Good Legato

A good legato can only be acquired after an enormous amount of thorough training. The tendency to be careless is human. Habits of carefulness come only after much drill. The object of the student and the teacher should be to make a singer—not to acquire a scanty repertoire of a few arias. Very few of the operas I now sing were learned in my student days. That was not the object of my teacher. The object was to prepare me to take up anything from *Martha* to *Rosenkavalier* and know how to study it myself in the quickest and most thorough manner. Woe be to the pupil of the teacher who spends most of the time in teaching songs, arias, etc., before the pupil is really ready to study such things.

Good Foundations

Everything is in a good foundation. If you expect a building to last only a few weeks you might put up a foundation in a day or so—but if you watch the builders of the great edifices here in American cities you will find that more time is often spent upon the foundation than upon the building itself. They dig right down to the bed rock and pile on so much stone, concrete and steel that even great earthquakes are often withstood.

A Large Repertoire

With such a thorough foundation as I had it has not been difficult to acquire a repertoire of some seventy-five operas. That is, by learning one at a time and working continually over a number of years the operas come easily. In learning a new work I first read the work through as a whole several times to get the character well fixed in my mind. Then I play the music through several times until I am very familiar with it. Then I learn the voice part, never studying it as a voice part by itself, but always in relation to the orchestra and the other rôles. Finally, I learn the interpretation—the dramatic presentation. One gets so little help from the orchestra in modern works that many rehearsals are necessary. In some passages it is just like walking in a dark night. Only a true ear and thorough training can serve to keep one on the key or anywhere near the key. It is therefore highly necessary that vocal students should have a good musical training in addition to the vocal training. In most European conservatories the study of piano and harmony are compulsory for all vocal students. Not to have had this musical training that the study of the piano brings about, not to have had a good course in theory or in training for sight-singing (ear training) is to leave out important pillars in a thorough musical foundation.

More Opera for America

It would be a great gratification for all who are interested in opera to see more fine opera houses erected in America with more opportunities for the people. The performances at the Metropolitan are exceedingly fine, but only a comparatively few people can possibly hear them and there is little opportunity for the performance of a wide variety of operas. The opera singer naturally gets tired of singing a few rôles over and over again. The American people should develop a taste for more and more different operas. There is such a wonderful field that it should not be confined to the performance of a very few works that happen to be in fashion. This is not at all the case in Europe—there the repertoires are very much more extensive—more interesting for the public and the artists alike.

Strong Educational Value of Opera

Opera has always seemed to me a very necessary thing in the State. It has a strong educational value in that it develops the musical taste of the public as well as teaching lessons in history and the humanities in a very forceful manner. Children should be taken to opera as a regular part of their education. Opera makes a wonderful impression upon the child's imagination—the romance, the color, the music, the action are rarely forgotten. Many of the operas are beautiful big fairy stories and the little folks glory

in them. Parents who desire to develop the taste of their children and at the same time stimulate their minds along broader lines can do no better than to take them to opera. Little towns in Europe often have fine opera houses, while many American cities several times their size have to put up with moving picture theatre houses. Why does not some enthusiastic American leader take up a campaign for more opera in America? With the taste of the public educated through countless talking machine records, it should not prove a bad business venture if it is gone about in a sensible manner.

DAME NELLIE MELBA

BIOGRAPHICAL

Dame Nellie Melba (stage name for Mrs. Nellie Porter Armstrong, née Mitchell) is described in Grove's Dictionary as "the first singer of British birth to attain such an exalted position upon the lyric stage as well as upon the concert platform." Dame Melba was born at Burnley near Melbourne, May 19, 1861, of Scotch ancestry. She sang at the Town Hall at Richmond when she was six years of age. She studied piano, harmony, composition and violin very thoroughly. At one time she was considered the finest amateur pianist in Melbourne. She also played the church organ in the local church with much success. In 1882 she married Captain Charles Armstrong, son of Sir Andrew Armstrong, Baronet (of Kings County, Ireland). In 1886 she sang at Queens Hall in London. After studying with Mme. Marchesi for twelve months she made her début as Gilda (*Rigoletto*) at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. Her success was instantaneous. Her London début was made in *Lucia* in 1888. One year later she made her Parisian début in Thomas' *Hamlet*. In 1894 she created the rôle of Nedda in *I Pagliacci*. Petrograd "went wild" over her in 1892. In 1892 she repeated her successes and in 1893 she began her long series of American triumphs. The fact that her voice, like that of Patti, has remained astonishingly fresh and silvery despite the enormous amount of singing she has done attests better than anything else to the excellence of her method of singing. In the following conference she gives the secret of preserving the voice.



Dame Nellie Melba.

COMMON SENSE IN TRAINING AND PRESERVING THE VOICE

DAME NELLIE MELBA

How Can a Good Voice be Detected?

The young singer's first anxiety is usually to learn whether her voice is sufficiently good to make it worth while to go through the enormous work of preparing herself for the operatic stage. How is she to determine this? Surely not upon the advice of her immediate friends, nor upon that of those to whom she would naturally turn for spiritual advice, medical advice or legal advice. But this is usually just what she does. Because of the honored positions held by her rector, her physician, or her family lawyer, their services are all brought to bear upon her, and after an examination of her musical ability their unskilled opinion is given a weight it obviously does not deserve. The only one to judge is a skilled musician, with good artistic taste and some experience in voice matters. It is sometimes difficult to approach a singing teacher for this advice, as even the most honest could not fail to be somewhat influenced where there is a prospect of a pupil. I do not mean to malign the thousands of worthy teachers, but such a position is a delicate one, and the pupil should avoid consulting with any adviser except one who is absolutely disinterested.

In any event the mere possession of a voice that is

sweet and strong by no means indicates that the owner has the additional equipment which the singer must possess. Musical intelligence is quite as great an asset as the possession of a fine voice. By musical intelligence I mean something quite different from general intelligence. People seem to expect that the young person who desires to become a fine pianist or a fine violinist, or a fine composer, should possess certain musical talents. That is, they should experience a certain quickness in grasping musical problems and executing them. The singer, however, by some peculiar popular ruling seems to be exempted from this. No greater mistake could possibly be made. Very few people are musically gifted. When one of these people happens to possess a good voice, great industry, a love for vocal art, physical strength, patience, good sense, good taste and abundant faith in her possibilities, the chances of making a good singer are excellent. I lay great stress upon great determination and good health. I am often obliged to sing one night, then travel a thousand miles to sing the next night. Notwithstanding such journeys, the singer is expected to be in prime condition, look nice, and please a veritable multitude of comparative strangers all expecting wonderful things from her. Do you wonder that I lay stress upon good health?

The youthful training of the singer should be confined quite strictly to that of obtaining a good general and musical education. That is, the vocal training may be safely postponed until the singer is seventeen

or eighteen years of age. Of course there have been cases of famous singers who have sung during their childhood, but they are exceptions to all rules. The study of singing demands the direction of an intelligent, well-ordered mind. It is by no means wholly a matter of imitation. In fact, without some cultivation of the taste, that is, the sense of discriminating between what is good and bad, one may imitate with disastrous results.

What Work Should the Girl Under Eighteen Do?

I remember well an incident in my own youth. I once went to a concert and heard a much lauded singer render an aria that was in turn vociferously applauded by the audience. This singer possessed a most wonderful tremolo. Every tone went up and down like the teeth of a saw. It was impossible for her to sing a pure even tone without wobbling up and down. But the untrained audience, hungry to applaud anything musical, had cheered the singer despite the tremolo. Consequently I went home and after a few minutes' work I found that it was possible for me to produce a very wonderful tremolo. I went proudly to my teacher and gave an exhibition of my new acquirement. "Who on earth have you been listening to?" exclaimed my teacher. I confessed and was admonished not to imitate.

The voice in childhood is a very delicate organ despite the wear and tear which children give it by unnecessary howling and screaming. More than this,

the child-mind is so susceptible to impressions and these impressions become so firmly fixed that the best vocal training for the child should be that of taking the little one to hear great singers. All that the juvenile mind hears is not lost, although much will be forgotten. However, the better part will be unconsciously stowed away in the subconscious mind, to burst forth later in beautiful song through no different process than that by which the little birds store away the song of the older birds. Dealers in singing birds place them in rooms with older and highly developed singing birds to train them. This is not exactly a process of imitation, but rather one of subconscious assimilation. The bird develops his own song later on, but has the advantage of the stored-up impressions of the trained birds.

A General Musical Training

I have known many singers to fail dismally because they were simply singers. The idea that all the singer needs to know is how to produce tones resonantly and sweetly, how to run scales, make gestures and smile prettily is a perfectly ridiculous one. Success, particularly operatic success, depends upon a knowledge of a great many things. The general education of the singer should be as well rounded as possible. Nothing the singer ever learns in the public schools, or the high schools, is ever lost. History and languages are most important. I studied Italian and French in my childhood and this knowledge was of immense help to me in my later work. When I first went to Paris I had

to acquire a colloquial knowledge of the language, but in all cases I found that the drill in French verbs I had gone through virtually saved me years of work. The French pronunciation is extremely difficult to acquire and some are obliged to reside in France for years before a fluent pronunciation can be counted on.

I cannot speak too emphatically upon the necessity for a thorough musical education. A smattering is only an aggravation. Fortunately, my parents saw to it that I was taught the piano, the organ, the violin and thoroughbass. At first it was thought that I would become a professional pianist; and many were good enough to declare that I was the finest amateur pianist in Melbourne. My Scotch-Presbyterian parents would have been horrified if they had had any idea that they were helping me to a career that was in any way related to the footlights. Fortunately, my splendid father, who is now eighty-five years old, has long since recovered from his prejudices and is the proudest of all over my achievements. But I can not be too grateful to him for his great interest in seeing that my early musical training was comprehensive. Aside from giving me a more musicianly insight into my work, it has proved an immense convenience. I can play any score through. I learn all my operas myself. This enables me to form my own conception, that is, to create it, instead of being unconsciously influenced by the tempos and expression of some other individual. The times that I have depended upon a *repititeur* have been so few that I can hardly remember them. So there,

little girl, when you get on your mother's long train and sing to an imaginary audience of thousands, you will do better to run to the keyboard and practice scales or study your études.

The First Vocal Practice

The first vocal practice should be very simple. There should be nothing in the way of an exercise that would encourage forcing of any kind. In fact the young singer should always avoid doing anything beyond the normal. Remember that a sick body means a sick voice. Again, don't forget your daily outdoor exercise. Horseback riding, golf and tennis are my favorites. An hour's walk on a lovely country road is as good for a singer as an hour's practice. I mean that.

In avoiding strain the pupil must above all things learn to sing the upper notes without effort or rather strain. While it is desirable that a pupil should practice all her notes every day, she should begin with the lower notes, then take the middle notes and then the so-called upper notes or head notes which are generally described as beginning with the F sharp on the top line of the treble staff. This line may be regarded as a danger line for singers young and old. It is imperative that when the soprano sings her head notes, beginning with F sharp and upward, they shall proceed very softly and entirely without strain as they ascend. can not emphasize this too strongly.

Preserving the Voice

Let me give you one of my greatest secrets. Like all secrets, it is perfectly simple and entirely rational. *Never give the public all you have.* That is, the singer owes it to herself never to go beyond the boundaries of her vocal possibilities. The singer who sings to the utmost every time is like the athlete who exhausts himself to the state of collapse. This is the only way in which I can account for what the critics term "the remarkable preservation" of my own voice. I have been singing for years in all parts of the musical world, growing richer in musical and human experience and yet my voice to-day feels as fresh and as clear as when I was in my teens. I have never strained, I have never continued rôles that proved unsuited to me, I have never sung when I have not been in good voice.

This leads to another very important point. I have often had students ask me how they can determine whether their teachers are giving them the kind of method or instruction they should have. I have always replied, "If you feel tired after a lesson, if your throat is strained after a little singing, if you feel exhausted, your teacher is on the wrong track, no matter what he labels his method or how wonderful his credentials are."

Isn't that very simple? I have known young girls to go on practicing until they couldn't speak. Let them go to a physician and have the doctor show them by means of a laryngoscope just how tender and deli-

cate their vocal organs are. I call them my "little bits of cotton"; they seem so frail and so tiny. Do you wonder that I guard them carefully? This practice consists of the simplest imaginable exercises—sustained scales, chromatic scales and trills. It is not so much *what* one practices, but *how* one practices.

Is the Art of Singing Dying Out?

We continually hear critics complain that the art of singing is dying. It is easy enough to be a pessimist, and I do not want to class myself with the pessimists; but I can safely say that, unless more attention is paid to the real art of singing, there must be a decadence in a short time. By this I mean that the voice seems to demand a kind of exercise leading to flexibility and fluent tone production that is not found in the ultra-dramatic music of any of the modern composers. Young singers begin with good voices and, after an altogether inadequate term of preparation, they essay the works of Strauss and Wagner. In two years the first sign of a breakup occurs. Their voices become rough,—the velvet vanishes and note after note "breaks" disagreeably. The music of the older Italian composers, from Scarlatti or Carissimi to Donizetti and Bellini, despite the absurd libretti of their operas, demanded first of all dulcet tones and limpid fluency. The singers who turned their noses up at the florid arabesques of old Italy for the more rugged pageantry of modern Germany are destined to suffer the consequences. Let us have the masterpieces of the heroic

Teutons, by all means, but let them be sung by vocalists trained as vocalists and not merely by actors who have only taken a few steps in vocal art.

The main point of all operatic work must be observed if opera is to continue successfully. Délibes chose me to sing a performance of his *Lakmé* at Brussels. It was to be my début in French. I had not then mastered the French pronunciation so that I could sing acceptably at the Paris Grand Opera, the scene of my later triumphs. Consequently I was permitted to sing in Brussels. There the directors objected to my pronunciation, calling it "abominable." Délibes replied, "*Qu'elle chante en chinois, si elle veut, mais qu'elle chante mon opera*" ("Even if she sang in Chinese, I would be glad to have her sing my opera").

I am asked what has been my greatest incentive. I can think of nothing greater than opposition. The early opposition from my family made me more and more determined to prove to them that I would be successful. If I heard some singer who sang successfully the rôles I essayed, then I would immediately make up my mind to excel that singer. This is a human trait I know; but I always profited by it. Never be afraid of competition or opposition. The more you overcome, the greater will be your ultimate triumph.

MME. BERNICE DE PASQUALI

Biographical

Mme. Bernice de Pasquali, who succeeded Marcella Sembrich as coloratura soprano at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City, is not an Italian, as her name suggests, but an American. She was born in Boston and is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Practically all of her musical training was received in New York City where she became a pupil of Oscar Saenger. Her successes, however, are not limited to America as she has appeared in Mexico, Cuba, South Africa and Europe, in many places receiving great ovations. Her voice is a clear, high, flexible soprano, equally fine for concert or opera. Her husband, Signor Pasquali, made a lifetime study of the principles of the "Bel Canto" school of singing, and the following conference is the result of long experiment and study in the esthetic, philosophical and physiological factors in the most significant of the so-called methods of voice training.



MME. BERNICE DE PASQUALI.

SECRETS OF BEL CANTO

MME. BERNICE DE PASQUALI

Centuries of Experimental Experience

In no land is song so much a part of the daily life of the individual as in Italy. The Italian peasant literally wakes up singing and goes to bed singing. Naturally a kind of respect, honor and even reverence attaches to the art of beautiful voice production in the land of Scarlatti, Palestrina and Verdi, that one does not find in other countries. When the Italian singing teachers looked for a word to describe their vocal methods they very naturally selected the most appropriate, "Bel Canto," which means nothing more or less than "Beautiful Singing."

Probably no words have been more abused in music teaching than "bel canto," and probably no words have a more direct meaning or a wider significance. What then is "good singing" as the Italians understand it? Principally the production of a perfectly controlled and exquisitely beautiful tone. Simple as this may seem and simple as it really is, the laws underlying the best way of teaching how to secure a beautiful tone are the evolution of empirical experiences coming down through the centuries.

It is a significant fact that practically all of the great singers in Wagner rôles have first been trained

in what is so loosely termed "bel canto" methods. Lilli Lehmann, Schumann-Heink, Nordica and others were capable of singing fine coloratura passages before they undertook the works of the great master of Beyreuth.

The Secret of Conserving the Voice

In the mass of traditions, suggestions and advice which go to make the "bel canto" style, probably nothing is so important to American students as that which pertains to conserving the voice. Whether our girls are inordinately fond of display or whether they are unable to control their vocal organs I do not know, but one is continually treated to instances of the most ludicrous prodigality of voice. The whole idea of these young singers seems to be to make a "hit" by shouting or even screeching. There can be no milder terms for the straining of the tones so frequently heard. This prodigality has only one result—loss of voice.

The great Rubini once wrote to his friend, the tenor Duprez, "You lost your voice because you always sang with your capital. I have kept mine because I have used only the interest." This historical epigram ought to be hung in all the vocal studios of America. Our American voices are too beautiful, too rare to be wasted, practically thrown away by expending the capital before it has been able to earn any interest.

Moreover, the thing which has the most telling effect upon any audience is the beauty of tone quality.

People will stop at any time to listen to the wonderful call of the nightingale. In some parts of Europe it is the custom to make parties to go at nights to the woods to hear that wonderful singer of the forests. Did you ever hear of any one forming a party for the express purpose of listening to the crowing of a rooster? One is a treat to the ear, the other is a shock. When our young singers learn that people do not attend concerts to have their ears shocked but to have them delighted with beautiful sound, they will be nearer the right idea in voice culture.

The student's first effort, then, should be to preserve the voice. From the very first lesson he must strive to learn how to make the most with little.

How is the student to know when he is straining the voice? This is simple enough to ascertain. At the very instant that the slightest constriction or effort is noticed strain is very likely to be present. Much of this depends upon administering exactly the right amount of breath to the vocal cords at the moment of singing. Too much breath or too little breath is bad. The student finds by patient experiment under the direction of the experienced teacher just how much breath to use. All sorts of devices are employed to test the breath, but it is probable that the best devices of all are those which all singers use as the ultimate test, the ear and the feeling of delightful relaxation surrounding the vocal organs during the process of singing.

Courage in Singing

Much of the student's early work is marred by fear. He fears to do this and he fears to do that, until he feels himself walled in by a set of rules that make his singing stilted. From the very start the singer, particularly the one who aspires to become an operatic singer, should endeavor to discard fear entirely. Think that if you fail in your efforts, thousands of singers have failed in a similar manner in their student days. Success in singing is at the end of a tall ladder, the rungs of which are repeated failures. We climb up over our failures to success. Learn to fear nothing, the public least of all. If the singer gives the audience the least suspicion that she is in fear of their verdict, the audience will detect it at once and the verdict will be bad. Also do not fear the criticism of jealous rivals.

Affirm success. Say to yourself, "I will surely succeed if I persevere." In this way you will acquire those habits of tranquillity which are so essential for the singer to possess.

The Reason for the Lack of Well-Trained Voices

There are abundant opportunities just now for finely trained singers. In fact there is a real dearth of "well-equipped" voices. Managers are scouring the world for singers with ability as well as the natural voice. Why does this dearth exist? Simply because the trend of modern musical work is far too rapid. Re-

sults are expected in an impossible space of time. The pupil and the maestro work for a few months and, lo and behold! a prima donna! Can any one who knows anything about the art of singing fail to realize how absurd this is? More voices are ruined by this haste than by anything else. It is like expecting the child to do the feats of the athlete without the athlete's training. There are singers in opera now who have barely passed the, what might be called, rudimentary stage.

With the decline of the older operas, singers evidently came to the conclusion that it was not necessary to study for the perfection of tone-quality, evenness of execution and vocal agility. The modern writers did not write such fioratura passages, then why should it be necessary for the student to bother himself with years of study upon exercises and vocalises designed to prepare him for the operas of Bellini, Rossini, Spontini, Donizetti, Scarlatti, Carissimi or other masters of the florid school? What a fatuous reasoning. Are we to obliterate the lessons of history which indicate that voices trained in such a school as that of Patti, Jenny Lind, Sembrich, Lehmann, Malibran, Rubini and others, have phenomenal endurance, and are able to retain their freshness long after other voices have faded? No, if we would have the wonderful vitality and longevity of the voices of the past we must employ the methods of the past.

The Delicate Nature of the Human Voice

Of all instruments the human voice is by far the most delicate and the most fragile. The wonder is that it will stand as much "punishment" as is constantly given to it. Some novices seem to treat it with as little respect as though it were made out of brass like a tuba or a trombone. The voice is subject to physical and psychical influences. Every singer knows how acutely all human emotions are reflected in the voice; at the same time all physical ailments are immediately active upon the voice of the singer.

There is a certain freshness or "edge" which may be worn off the voice by ordinary conversation on the day of the concert or the opera. Some singers find it necessary to preserve the voice by refraining from all unnecessary talking prior to singing. Long-continued practice is also very bad. An hour is quite sufficient on the day of the concert. During the first years of study, half an hour a day is often enough practice. More practice should only be done under special conditions and with the direction of a thoroughly competent teacher.

Singing in the open air, when particles of dust are blowing about, is particularly bad. The throat seems to become irritated at once. In my mind tobacco smoke is also extremely injurious to the voice, notwithstanding the fact that some singers apparently resist its effects for years. I once suffered severely from the effects of being in a room filled with tobacco smoke and

was unable to sing for at least two months. I also think that it is a bad plan to sing immediately after eating. The peristaltic action of the stomach during the process of digestion is a very pronounced function and anything which might tend to disturb it might affect the general health.

The singer must lead an exceedingly regular life, but the exaggerated privations and excessive care which some singers take are quite unnecessary. The main thing is to determine what is a normal life and then to live as close to this as possible. If you find that some article of diet disagrees with you, remember to avoid that food; for an upset stomach usually results in complete demoralization of the entire vocal system.

Some Practice Suggestions

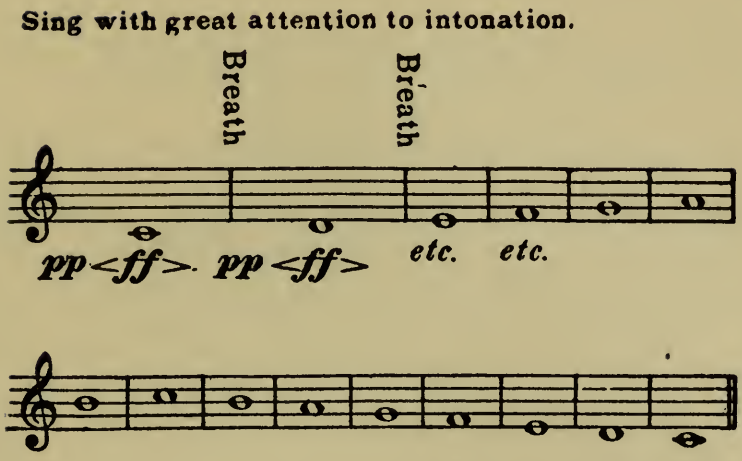
No matter how great the artist, daily practice, if even not more than forty minutes a day, is absolutely necessary. There is a deep philosophical and physiological principle underlying this and it applies particularly to the vocal student. Each minute spent in intelligent practice makes the voice better and the task easier. The power to do comes with doing. Part of each day's practice should be devoted to singing the scale softly and slowly with perfect intonation. Every tone should be heard with the greatest possible acuteness. The ears should analyze the tone quality with the same scrutiny with which a botanist would examine the petals of a newly discovered specimen. As the singer does this he will notice that his sense of tone

color will develop; and this is a very vital part of every successful singer's equipment. He will become aware of beauties as well as defects in his voice which may never have been even suspected if he will only listen "microscopically" enough.

Much of the singer's progress depends upon the mental model he keeps before him. The singer who constantly hears the best of singing naturally progresses faster than one surrounded by inferior singing. This does not recommend that the student should imitate blindly but that he should hear as much fine singing as possible. Those who have not the means to attend concerts and the opera may gain immensely from hearing fine records. Little Adelina Patti, playing as a child on the stage of the old Academy of Music in New York, was really attending the finest kind of a conservatory unawares.

The old Italian teachers and writers upon voice, knowing the florid style in which their pupils would be expected to sing, did not have much to do with fanciful exercises. They gave their lives to the quest of the "bel canto"; and many of them had difficulty in convincing their pupils that the simplest exercises were often the hardest. Take for instance this invaluable scale exercise sung with the marks of expression carefully observed.

This exercise is one of the most difficult to sing properly. Nevertheless, some student will rush on to florid exercises before he can master this exercise. To sing it right it must be regarded with almost devotional reverence. Indeed, it may well be practiced diligently



for years. Every tone is a problem, a problem which must be solved in the brain and in the body of the singer and not in the mind of any teacher. The student must hold up every tone for comparison with his ideal tone. Every note must ring sweet and clear, pure and free. Every tone must be even more susceptible to the emotions than the expression upon the most mobile face. Every tone must be made the means of conveying some human emotion. Some singers practice their exercises in such a perfunctory manner that they get as a result voices so stiff and hard that they sound as though they came from metallic instruments which could only be altered in a factory instead of from throats lined with a velvet-like membrane.

Flexibility, mobility and susceptibility to expression are quite as important as mere sweetness. After the above exercise has been mastered the pupil may pass to the chromatic scale (scala semitonata sostenuto); and this scale should be sung in the same slow sustained manner as the foregoing illustration.

MME. MARCELLA SEMBRICH

Biographical

Mme. Marcella Sembrich (Praxede Marcelline Kochanska) was born in Wisnewczyk, Galicia, February 15, 1858. Sembrich was her mother's name. Her father was a music teacher and she tells with pleasure how she watched her father make a little violin for her to practice upon. At the age of seven she was taken to Wilhelm Stengel at Lemberg for further instruction. Later she went to study with the famous pedagogue, Julius Epstein, at Vienna, who was amazed by the child's prodigious talent as a pianist and as a violinist. He asked, "Is there anything else she can do?" "Yes," replied Stengel, "I think she can sing." Sing she did; and Epstein was not long in determining that she should follow the career of the singer. Her other teachers were Victor Rokitansky, Richard Lewy and G. B. Lamperti and a few months with the elder Francesco Lamperti. Her début was made in Athens in 1877, in *I Puritani*. Thereafter she toured all of the European art centers with invariable success. Her first American appearance was in 1883. She came again in 1898 and for years sang with immense success in all parts of America. America has since become her home, where she has devoted much time to teaching.



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MME. MARCELLA SEMBRICH.

HOW FORTUNES ARE WASTED IN VOCAL EDUCATION

MME. MARCELLA SEMBRICH

Every One Who Can Should Learn to Sing

Few accomplishments are more delight-giving than that of being able to sing. I would most enthusiastically advise anyone possessing a fair voice to have it trained by some reliable singing teacher. European peoples appreciate the great privilege of being able to sing for their own amusement, and the pleasure they get from their singing societies is inspiring.

If Americans took more time for the development of accomplishments of this kind their journey through life would be far more enjoyable and perhaps more profitable. I believe that all should understand the art of singing, if only to become amateurs.

That music makes the soul more beautiful I have not the least doubt. Because some musicians have led questionable lives does not prove the contrary. What might these men have been had they not been under the benign influence of music?

One has only to watch people who are under the magic spell of beautiful music to understand what a power it has for the good. I believe that good vocal music should be a part of all progressive educational work. The more music we have, the more beautiful

this world will be, the more kindly people will feel toward each other and the more life will be worth living.

Wrong to Encourage Voiceless Aspirants

But when I say that everyone who possesses a voice should learn to sing I do not by any means wish to convey the idea that anyone who desires may become a great singer. That is a privilege that is given to but a very few fortunate people. So many things go together to make a great singer that the one who gives advice should be very circumspect in encouraging young people to undertake a professional career—especially an operatic career. Giving advice under any conditions is often thankless.

I have been appealed to by hundreds of girls who have wanted me to hear them sing. I have always told them what seemed to me the truth, but I have been so dismayed at the manner in which this has been received that I hesitate greatly before hearing aspiring singers.

It is the same way with the teachers. I know that some teachers are blamed for taking voiceless pupils, but the pupils are more often to blame than the teacher. I have known pupils who have been discouraged by several good teachers to persist until they finally found a teacher who would take them.

Most teachers are conscientious—often too conscientious for their pocketbooks. If a representative teacher or a prominent singer advises you not to at-

tempt a public career you should thank him, as he is doubtless trying to save you from years of miserable failure. It is a very serious matter for the pupil, and one that should be given almost sacred consideration by those who have the pupil's welfare at heart.

Wise, indeed, is the young singer who can so estimate her talents that she will start along the right path. There are many positions which are desirable and laudable which can be ably filled by competent singers. If you have limitations which will prevent your ever reaching that "will-o'-the-wisp" known as "fame," do not waste money trying to achieve what is obviously out of your reach.

If you can fill the position of soloist in a small choir creditably, do so and be contented. Don't aspire for operatic heights if you are hopelessly shackled by a lack of natural qualifications.

It is a serious error to start vocal instruction too early. I do not believe that the girl's musical education should commence earlier than at the age of sixteen. It is true that in the cases of some very healthy girls no very great damage may be done, but it is a risk I certainly would not advise.

Much money and time are wasted upon voice training of girls under the age of sixteen. If the girl is destined for a great career she will have the comprehension, the grasp, the insight that will lead her to learn very rapidly. Some people can take in the whole meaning of a picture at a glance; others are obliged to regard the picture for hours to see the same points of

artistic interest. Quick comprehension is a great asset, and the girl who is of the right sort will lose nothing by waiting until she reaches the above age.

Piano or Violin Study Advisable for all Singers

Ambition, faithfulness to ideals and energy are the only hopes left open to the singer who is not gifted with a wonderfully beautiful natural voice. It is true that some singers of great intelligence and great energy have been able to achieve wide fame with natural voices that under other conditions would only attract local notice. These singers deserve great credit for their efforts.

While the training of the voice may be deferred to the age of sixteen, the early years should by no means be wasted. The general education of the child, the fortification of the health and the study of music through the medium of some instrument are most important. The young girl who commences voice study with the ability to play either the violin or the piano has an enormous advantage over the young girl who has had no musical training.

I found the piano training of my youth of greatest value, and through the study of the violin I learned certain secrets that I later applied to respiration and phrasing. Although my voice was naturally flexible, I have no doubt that the study of these instruments assisted in intonation and execution in a manner that I cannot over-estimate.

A beautiful voice is not so great a gift, unless its

possessor knows how to employ it to advantage. The musical training that one receives from the study of an instrument is of greatest value. Consequently, I advise parents who hope to make their children singers to give them the advantage of a thorough musical training in either violin study or the piano. Much wasted money and many blasted ambitions can be spared by such a course.

A Good General Education of Vast Importance

The singer whose general education has been neglected is in a most unfortunate plight. And by general education I do not mean only those academic studies that people learn in schools. The imagination must be stimulated, the heartfelt love for the poetical must be cultivated, and above all things the love for nature and mankind must be developed.

I can take the greatest joy in a walk through a great forest. It is an education to me to be with nature. Unfortunately, only too many Americans go rushing through life neglecting those things which make life worth living.

Musical Advance in America

There has been a most marvelous advance in this respect, however, in America. Not only in nature love but in art it has been my pleasure to watch a wonderful growth. When I first came here in 1883 things were entirely different in many respects. Now the great operatic novelties of Europe are presented here

in magnificent style, and often before they are heard in many European capitals.

In this respect America to-day ranks with the best in the world. Will you not kindly permit me to digress for a moment and say to the music lovers of America that I appreciate in the deepest manner the great kindnesses that have been shown to me everywhere? For this reason, I know that my criticisms, if they may be called such, will be received as they are intended.

The singer should make a serious study of languages. French, German, English and Italian are the most necessary ones. I include English as I am convinced that it is only a matter of a short time when a school of opera written by English-speaking composers will arise. The great educational and musical advance in America is an indication of this.

As for voice exercises, I have always been of the opinion that it is better to leave that matter entirely to the discretion of the teacher. There can be no universal voice exercise that will apply to all cases. Again, it is more a matter of how the exercise is sung than the exercise itself.

The simplest exercise can become valuable in the hands of the great teacher. I have no faith in the teachers who make each and every pupil go through one and the same set of exercises in the same way. The voice teacher is like the physician. He must originate and prescribe certain remedies to suit certain cases. Much money is wasted by trying to do without a good teacher. If the pupil really has a great

voice and the requisite talent, it is economical to take her to the best teacher obtainable.

American women have wonderful voices. Moreover, they have great energy, talent and temperament. Their accomplishments in the operatic world are matters of present musical history. With such splendid effort and such generosity, it is easy to prophesy a great future for musical America. This is the land of great accomplishments.

With time Americans will give more attention to the cultivation of details in art, they will acquire more repose perhaps, and then the tremendous energy which has done so much to make the country what it is will be a great factor in establishing a school of music in the new world which will rank with the greatest of all times.

MME. ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK

Biographical

Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink (née Roessler) was born near the city of Prague, July 15, 1861. She relates that her father was a Czech and her mother was of Italian extraction. She was educated in Ursuline Convent and studied singing with Mme. Marietta von Leclair in Graz. Her first appearance was at the age of 15, when she is reported to have taken a solo part in a performance of the Beethoven Ninth Symphony, at an important concert in Graz. Her operatic début was made at the Royal Opera, Dresden, in *Trovatore*. There she studied under Krebs and Franz Wüllner. It is impossible to detail Mme. Schumann-Heink's operatic successes here, since her numerous appearances at the leading operatic houses of the world have been followed by such triumphs that she is admittedly the greatest contralto soloist of her time. At Bayreuth, Covent Garden, and at the Metropolitan her appearances have drawn multitudes. In concert she proved one of the greatest of all singers of art songs. In 1905 she became an American citizen, her enthusiasm for this country leading her to name one of her sons George Washington. During the great war (in which four of her sons served with the American colors) she toured incessantly from camp to camp, giving her services for the entertainment of the soldiers and winning countless admirers in this way. Her glorious voice extends from D on the third line of the bass clef to C on the second leger line above the treble clef.



MME. ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK.

KEEPING THE VOICE IN PRIME CONDITION

MME. ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK

The Artist's Responsibility

Would you have me give the secret of my success at the very outstart? It is very simple and centers around this subject of the artist's responsibility to the audience. My secret is absolute devotion to the audience. I love my audiences. They are all my friends. I feel a bond with them the moment I step before them. Whether I am singing in blasé New York or before an audience of farmer folk in some Western Chautauqua, my attitude toward my audience is quite the same. I take the same care and thought with every audience. This even extends to my dress. The singer, who wears an elaborate gown before a Metropolitan audience and wears some worn-out old rag of a thing when singing at some rural festival, shows that she has not the proper respect in her mind. Respect is everything.

Therefore it is necessary for me to have my voice in the best of condition every day of the year. It is my duty to my audience. The woman who comes to a country Chautauqua and brings her baby with her and perchance nurses the little one during the concert gets a great deal closer to my heart than the stiff-backed aristocrat who has just left a Pekingese spaniel outside of the opera house door in a $6000.00 limousine. That

little country woman expects to hear the singer at her best. Therefore, I practice just as carefully on the day of the Chautauqua concert as I would if I were to sing *Ortrud* the same night at the Metropolitan in New York.

American audiences are becoming more and more discriminating. Likewise they are more and more responsive. As an American citizen, I am devoted to all the ideals of the new world. They have accepted me in the most whole-souled manner and I am grateful to the land of my adoption.

The Advantage of an Early Training

Whether or not the voice keeps in prime condition to-day depends largely upon the early training of the singer. If that training is a good one, a sound one, a sensible one, the voice will, with regular practice, keep in good condition for a remarkably long time. The trouble is that the average student is too impatient in these days to take time for a sufficient training. The voice at the outstart must be trained lightly and carefully. There must not be the least strain. I believe that at the beginning two lessons a week should be sufficient. The lessons should not be longer than one-half an hour and the home practice should not exceed at the start fifty minutes a day. Even then the practice should be divided into two periods. The young singer should practice *mezza voce*, which simply means nothing more or less than "half voice." Never practice with full voice unless singing under the direction of a

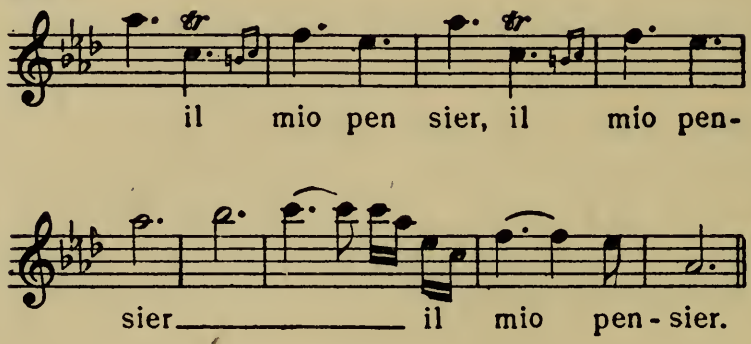
well-schooled teacher with years of practical singing experience.

It is easy enough to shout. Some of the singers in modern opera seem to employ a kind of megaphone method. They stand stock still on the stage and bawl out the phrases as though they were announcing trains in a railroad terminal. Such singers disappear in a few years. Their voices seem torn to shreds. The reason is that they have not given sufficient attention to *bel canto* in their early training. They seem to forget that voice must first of all be beautiful. *Bel canto*,—beautiful singing,—not the singing of meaningless Italian phrases, as so many insist, but the glorious *bel canto* which Bach, Haydn and Mozart demand,—a *bel canto* that cultivates the musical taste, disciplines the voice and trains the singer technically to do great things. Please understand that I am not disparaging the good and beautiful in Italian masterpieces. The musician will know what I mean. The singer can gain little, however, from music that intellectually and vocally is better suited to a parrot than a human being.

Some of the older singers made *bel canto* such an art that people came to hear them for their voices alone, and not for their intellectual or emotional interpretations of a rôle. Perhaps you never heard Patti in her prime. Ah! Patti—the wonderful Adelina with the glorious golden voice. It was she who made me ambitious to study breathing until it became an art. To hear her as she trippingly left the stage in Verdi's *Traviata* singing runs with ease and finish that other

singers slur or stumble over,—ah! that was an art!

Ex. 1



Volumes have been written on breathing and volumes more could be written. This is not the place to discuss the singer's great fundamental need. Need I say more than that I practice deep breathing every day of my life?

The Age for Starting

It is my opinion that no girl who wishes to keep her voice in the prime of condition all the time in after years should start to study much earlier than seventeen or eighteen years of age. In the case of a man I do not believe that he should start until he is past twenty or even twenty-two. I know that this is contrary to what many singers think, but the period of mutation in both sexes is a much slower process than most teachers realize, and I have given this matter a great deal of serious thought.

Let Everybody Sing!

Can I digress long enough to say that I think that everybody should sing? That is, they should learn to

sing under a good singing instructor. This does not mean that they should look forward toward a professional career. God forbid! There are enough half-baked singers in the world now who are striving to become professionals. But the public should know that singing is the healthiest kind of exercise imaginable. When one sings properly one exercises nearly all of the important muscles of the torso. The circulation of the blood is improved, the digestion bettered, the heart promoted to healthy action—in fact, everything is bettered. Singers as a rule are notoriously healthy and often very long lived. The new movement for community singing in the open air is a magnificent one. Let everybody sing!

A great singing teacher with a reputation as big as Napoleon's or George Washington's is not needed. There are thousands and thousands of unknown teachers who are most excellent. Often the advice or the instruction is very much the same. What difference does it make whether I buy Castile soap in a huge Broadway store or a little country store, if the soap is the same? Many people hesitate to study because they can not study with a great teacher. Nonsense! Pick out some sensible, well-drilled teacher and then use your own good judgment to guide yourself. Remember that Schumann-Heink did not study with a world-famed teacher. Whoever hears of Marietta von Leclair in these days? Yet I do not think that I could have done any more with my voice if I had had every famous teacher from Niccolo Antonio Porpora down

to the present day. The individual singer must have ideals, and then leave nothing undone to attain those ideals. One of my ideals was to be able to sing pianissimo with the kind of resonance that makes it carry up to the farthest gallery. That is one of the most difficult things I had to learn, and I attained it only after years of faithful practice.

The Singer's Daily Routine

To keep the voice in prime condition the singer's first consideration is physical and mental health. If the body or the mind is over-taxed singing becomes an impossibility. It is amazing what the healthy body and the busy mind can really stand. I take but three weeks' vacation during the year and find that I am a great deal better for it. Long terms of enforced indolence do not mean rest. The real artist is happiest when at work, and I want to work. Fortunately I am never at loss for opportunity. The ambitious vocal student can benefit as much by studying a good book on hygiene or the conservation of the health as from a book on the art of singing.

First of all comes diet. Americans as a rule eat far too much. Why do some of the good churchgoing people raise such an incessant row about over-drinking when they constantly injure themselves quite as much by over-eating? What difference does it make whether you ruin your stomach, liver or kidneys by too much alcohol or too much roast beef? One vice is as bad as another. The singer must live upon a light diet. A

heavy diet is by no means necessary to keep up a robust physique. I am rarely ill, am exceedingly strong in every way, and yet eat very little indeed. I find that my voice is in the best of condition when I eat very moderately. My digestion is a serious matter with me, and I take every precaution to see that it is not congested in any way. This is most important to the singer. Here is an average ménu for my days when I am on tour:

BREAKFAST
Two or more glasses of Cold Water
(not ice water)
Ham and Eggs
Coffee
Toast.

MID-DAY DINNER
Soup
Some Meat Order
A Vegetable
Plenty of Salad
Fruit.

SUPPER
A Sandwich
Fruit.

Such a ménu I find ample for the heaviest kind of professional work. If I eat more, my work may deteriorate, and I know it.

Fresh air, sunshine, sufficient rest and daily baths in tepid water night and morning are a part of my regu-

lar routine. I lay special stress upon the baths. Nothing invigorates the singer as much as this. Avoid very cold baths, but see to it that you have a good reaction after each bath. There is nothing like such a routine as this to avoid colds. If you have a cold try the same remedies to try to get rid of it. To me, one day at Atlantic City is better for a cold than all the medicine I can take. I call Atlantic City my cold doctor. Of course, there are many other shore resorts that may be just as helpful, but when I can do so I always make a bee line for Atlantic City the moment I feel a serious cold on the way.

Sensible singers know now that they must avoid alcohol, even in limited quantities, if they desire to be in the prime of condition and keep the voice for a long, long time. Champagne particularly is poison to the singer just before singing. It seems to irritate the throat and make good vocal work impossible. I am sorry for the singer who feels that some spur like champagne or a cup of strong coffee is desirable before going upon the stage.

It amuses me to hear girls say, "I would give anything to be a great singer"; and then go and lace themselves until they look like Jersey mosquitoes. The breath is the motive power of the voice. Without it under intelligent control nothing can be accomplished. One might as well try to run an automobile without gasoline as sing without breath. How can a girl breathe when she has squeezed her lungs to one-half their normal size?

Preparation for Heavy Rôles

The voice can never be kept in prime condition if it is obliged to carry a load that it has not been prepared to carry. Most voices that wear out are voices that have been overburdened. Either the singer does not know how to sing or the rôle is too heavy. I think that I may be forgiven for pointing out that I have repeatedly sung the heaviest and most exacting rôles in opera. My voice would have been shattered years ago if I had not prepared myself for these rôles and sung them properly. A man may be able to carry a load of fifty pounds for miles if he carries it on his back, but he will not be able to carry it a quarter of a mile if he holds it out at arm's length from the body, with one arm. Does this not make the point clear?

Some rôles demand maturity. It is suicidal for the young singer to attempt them. The composer and the conductor naturally think only of the effect at the performance. The singer's welfare with them is a secondary consideration. I have sung under the great composers and conductors, from Richard Wagner to Richard Strauss. Some of the Strauss rôles are even more strenuous than those of Wagner. They call for great energy as well as great vocal ability. Young singers essay these heavy rôles and the voices go to pieces. Why not wait a little while? Why not be patient?

The singer is haunted by the delusion that success can only come to her if she sings great rôles. If she

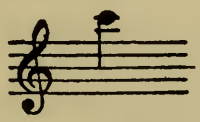
can not ape Melba in *Traviata*, Emma Eames as Elizabeth in *Tannhäuser* or Geraldine Farrar in *Butterfly*, she pouts and refuses to do anything. Offer her a small part and she sneers at it. Ha! Ha! All my earliest successes were made in the smallest kinds of parts. I realized that I had only a little to do and only very little time to do it in. Consequently, I gave myself heart and soul to that part. It must be done so artistically, so intelligently, so beautifully that it would command success. Imagine the rôles of Erda and Norna, and Marie in *Flying Dutchman*. They are so small that they can hardly be seen. Yet these rôles were my first door to success and fame. Wagner did not think of them as little things. He was a real master and knew that in every art-work a small part is just as important as a great part. It is a part of a beautiful whole. Don't turn up your nose at little things. Take every opportunity, and treat it as though it were the greatest thing in your life. It pays.

Everything that amounts to anything in my entire career has come through struggle. At first a horrible struggle with poverty. No girl student in a hall bedroom to-day (and my heart goes out to them now) endures more than I went through. It was work, work, work, from morning to night, with domestic cares and worries enough all the time to drive a woman mad. Keep up your spirits, girls. If you have the right kind of fight in you, success will surely come. Never think of discouragement, no matter what happens. Keep working every day and always hoping. It will come

out all right if you have the gift and the perseverance. Compulsion is the greatest element in the vocalist's success. Poverty has a knout in its hand driving you on. Well, let it,—and remember that under that knout you will travel twice as fast as the rich girl possibly can with her fifty-horse-power automobile. Keep true to the best. *Muss*,—"I MUST," "I will," the mere necessity is a help not a hindrance, if you have the right stuff in you. Learn to depend upon yourself, and know that when you have something that the public wants it will not be slow in running after you. Don't ask for help. I never had any help. Tell that to the aspiring geese who think that I have some magic power whereby I can help a mediocre singer to success by the mere twist of the hand.

Daily Exercises of a Prima Donna

Daily vocal exercises are the daily bread of the singer. They should be practiced just as regularly as one sits down to the table to eat, or as one washes one's teeth or as one bathes. As a rule the average professional singer does not resort to complicated exercises and great care is taken to avoid strain. It is perfectly easy for me, a contralto, to sing *C* in alt

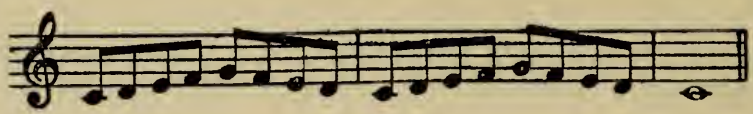


but do you suppose I sing it in my daily exercises? It is one of the extreme notes in my range and it
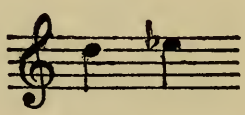
might be a strain. Consequently I avoid it. I also sing most of my exercises *mezza voce.*

There should always be periods of intermission between practice. I often go about my routine work while on tour, walking up and down the room, packing my trunk, etc., and practicing gently at the same time. I enjoy it and it makes my work lighter.

Of course I take great pains to practice carefully. My exercises are for the most part simple scales, arpeggios or trills. For instance, I will start with the following:



This I sing in middle voice and very softly. Thereby I do not become tired and I don't bother the neighborhood. If I sang this in the big, full lower tones and sang loud, my voice would be fatigued rather than benefited and the neighbors would hate me. This I continue up to *D* or *E* flat.

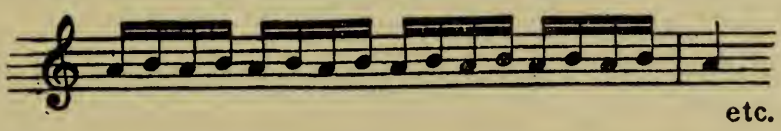


Above this I invariably use what is termed the head tone. Female singers should always begin the head tone on this degree of the staff and not on *F* and *F*♯, as is sometimes recommended.

I always use the Italian vowel *ah* in my exercises. It seems best to me. I know that *oo* and *ue* are recom-

mended for contraltos, but I have long had the firm conviction that one should first perfect the natural vocal color through securing good tones by means of the most open vowel. After this is done the voice may be further colored by the judicious employment of other vowels. Sopranos, for instance, can help their head tones by singing *ee* (Italian *i*).

I know nothing better for acquiring a flexible tone than to sing trills like the following:
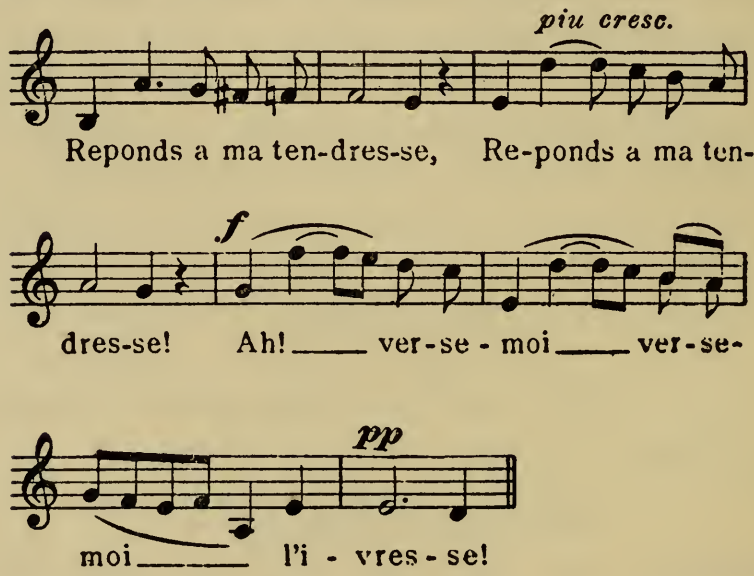


and at the same time preserve a gentle, smiling expression. Smile naturally, as though you were genuinely amused at something,—smile until your upper teeth are uncovered. Then, try these exercises with the vowel *ah*. Don't be afraid of getting a trivial, colorless tone. It is easy enough to make the tone sombre by willing it so, when the occasion demands. You will be amazed what this smiling, genial, *liebenswurdig* expression will do to relieve stiffness and help you in placing your voice right. The old Italians knew about it and advocated it strongly. There is nothing like it to keep the voice youthful, fresh and in the prime of condition.

The Singer Must Relax

Probably more voices are ruined by strain than through any other cause. The singer must relax all

the time. This does not mean flabbiness. It does not mean that the singer should collapse before singing. Relaxation in the singer's sense is a delicious condition of buoyancy, of lightness, of freedom, of ease and entire lack of tightening in any part. When I relax I feel as though every atom in my body were floating in space. There is not one single little nerve on tension. The singer must be particularly careful when approaching a climax in a great work of art. Then the tendency to tighten up is at its greatest. This must be anticipated.

Take such a case as the following passage from the famous aria from Saint Saëns' *Samson et Delila*, "*Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix.*" The climax is obviously on the words "Ah!—verse moi." The climax is the note marked by a star (*f* on the top line).



When I am singing the last notes of the previous

phrase to the word "tendresse," anyone who has observed me closely will notice that I instinctively let my shoulders drop,—that the facial muscles become relaxed as when one is about to smile or about to yawn. I am then relaxing to meet the great melodic climax and meet it in such a manner that I will have abundant reserve force after it has been sung. When one has to sing before an audience of five or six thousand people such a climax is immensely important and it requires great balance to meet it and triumph in it.

ANTONIO SCOTTI

Biographical

Antonio Scotti was born at Naples, Jan. 25, 1866, and did much of his vocal study there with Mme. Trifari Paganini. His début was made at the Teatro Reale, in the Island of Malta, in 1889. The opera was *Martha.* After touring the Italian opera houses he spent seven seasons in South America at a time when the interest in grand opera on that continent was developing tremendously. He then toured Spain and Russia with great success and made his début at Covent Garden, London, in 1899. His success was so great that he was immediately engaged for the Metropolitan in New York, where he has sung every season since that time. His most successful rôles have been in *La Tosca*, *La Bohême*, *I Pagliacci*, *Carmen*, *Falstaff*, *L'Oracolo* and *Otello.* His voice is a rich and powerful baritone. He is considered one of the finest actors among the grand opera singers. During recent years he has toured with an opera company of his own, making many successful appearances in some of the smaller as well as the larger American cities.



Portrait of Antonio Scotti in the Costume of His Most Famous Rôle, Scarpia, in "La Tosca," by Puccini.

ITALIAN OPERA IN AMERICA

ANTONIO SCOTTI

So closely identified is Italy with all that pertains to opera, that the question of the future of Italian opera in America is one that interests me immensely. It has been my privilege to devote a number of the best years of my life to singing in Italian opera in this wonderful country, and one cannot help noticing, first of all, the almost indescribable advance that America has made along all lines. It is so marvelous that those who reside continually in this country do not stop to consider it. Musicians of Europe who have never visited America can form no conception of it, and when they once have had an opportunity to observe musical conditions in America, the great opera houses, the music schools, the theatres and the bustling, hustling activity, together with the extraordinary casts of world-famous operatic stars presented in our leading cities, they are amazed in the extreme.

It is very gratifying for me to realize that the operatic compositions of my countrymen must play a very important part in the operatic future of America. It has always seemed to me that there is far more variety in the works of the modern Italian composers than in those of other nations. Almost all of the later German operas bear the unmistakable stamp of Wagner. Those

which do not, show decided Italian influences. The operas of Mozart are largely founded on Italian models, although they show a marvelous genius peculiar to the great master who created them.

Operatic Tendencies

The Italian opera of the future will without doubt follow the lead of Verdi, that is, the later works of Verdi. To me *Falstaff* seems the most remarkable of all Italian operas. The public is not well enough acquainted with this work to demand it with the same force that they demand some of the more popular works of Verdi. Verdi was always melodious. His compositions are a beautiful lace-work of melodies. It has seemed to me that some of the Italian operatic composers who have been strongly influenced by Wagner have made the mistake of supposing that Wagner was not a master of melody. Consequently they have sacrificed their Italian birthright of melody for all kinds of cacophony. Wagner was really wonderfully melodious. Some of his melodies are among the most beautiful ever conceived. I do not refer only to the melodies such as "Oh, Thou Sublime Evening Star" of *Tannhäuser* or the "Bridal March" of *Lohengrin*, but also to the inexhaustible fund of melodies that one may find in most every one of his astonishing works. True, these melodies are different in type from most melodies of Italian origin, but they are none the less melodies, and beautiful ones. Verdi's later operas contain such melodies and he is the model which the

young composers of Italy will doubtless follow. Puccini, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and others, have written works rich in melody and yet not wanting in dramatic charm, orchestral accompaniment and musicianly treatment.

Opera the Natural Genius of Italy's Composers

When the Italian student leaves the conservatory, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred his ambitions are solely along the line of operatic composition. This seems his natural bent or mould. Of course he has written small fugues and perhaps even symphonies, but in the majority of instances these have been mere academic exercises. I regret that this is the case, and heartily wish that we had more Bossis, Martuccis and Sgambattis, but, again, would it not be a great mistake to try to make a symphonist out of an operatic composer? In the case of Perosi I often regret that he is a priest and therefore cannot write for the theatre, because I earnestly believe that notwithstanding his success as a composer of religious music, his natural bent is for the theatre or the opera.

The Composers of To-day

Of the great Italian opera composers of to-day, I feel that Puccini is, perhaps, the greatest because he has a deeper and more intimate appreciation of theatrical values. Every note that Puccini writes smells of the paint and canvas behind the proscenium arch. He seems to know just what kind of music will go best

with a certain series of words in order to bring out the dramatic meaning. This is in no sense a depreciation of the fine things that Mascagni, Leoncavallo and others have done. It is simply my personal estimate of Puccini's worth as an operatic composer. Personally, I like *Madama Butterfly* better than any other Italian opera written in recent years. Aside from *Falstaff*, my own best rôle is probably in *La Tosca*. The two most popular Italian operas of to-day are without doubt *Aïda* and *Madama Butterfly*. That is, these operas draw the greatest audiences at present. It is gratifying to note a very much unified and catholic taste throughout the entire country. That is to say, in Chicago, San Francisco, Boston and Philadelphia one finds the public taste very similar. This indicates that the great musical advance in recent years in America has not been confined to one or two eastern cities.

The Influence of the Star System

It is often regretable that the reputation of the singer draws bigger audiences in America than the work to be performed. American people go to hear some particular singer and not to hear the work of the composer. In other countries this is not so invariably the rule. It is a condition that may be overcome in time in America. It often happens that remarkably good performances are missed by the public who are only drawn to the opera house when some great operatic celebrity sings.

The intrinsic beauties of the opera itself should have

much to do with controlling its presentation. In all cases at present the Italian opera seems in preponderance, but this cannot be said to be a result of the engagement of casts composed exclusively of Italian singers. In our American opera houses many singers of many different nationalities are engaged in singing in Italian opera. Personally, I am opposed to operas being sung in any tongue but that in which the opera was originally written. If I am not mistaken, the Covent Garden Opera House and the Metropolitan Opera House are the nly two opera houses in the world where this system is followed. No one can realize what I mean until he has heard a Wagner opera presented in French, a tongue that seems absolutely unfitted for the music of Wagner.

The Possible Influence of Strauss and Debussy

I do not feel that either Strauss or Debussy will have an influence upon the music of the coming Italian composers similar to that which the music of Wagner had upon Verdi and his followers. Personally, I admire them very much, but they seem unvocal, and Italy is nothing if not vocal. To me *Pellèas and Mélisande* would be quite as interesting if it were acted in pantomime with the orchestral accompaniment. The voice parts, to my way of thinking, could almost be dispensed with. The piece is a beautiful dream, and the story so evident that it could almost be played as an "opera without words." But vocal it certainly is not, and the opportunities of the singer are decidedly lim-

ited. Strauss, also, does not even treat the voice with the scant consideration bestowed upon it in some of the extreme passages of the Wagner operas. Occasionally the singer has an opportunity, but it cannot be denied that to the actor and the orchestra falls the lion's share of the work.

Operatic Centers in Italy

Americans seem to think that the only really great operatic center of Italy is Milan. This is doubtless due to the celebrity of the famous opera house, La Scala, and to the fact that the great publishing house of Ricordi is located there, but it is by no means indicative of the true condition. The fact is that the appreciation of opera is often greater outside of Milan than in the city. In Naples, Rome and Florence opera is given on a grand scale, and many other Italian cities possess fine theaters and fine operatic companies. The San Carlos Company, at Naples, is usually exceptionally good, and the opera house itself is a most excellent one. The greatest musical industry centers around Milan owing, as we have said, to the publishing interests in that city. If an Italian composer wants to produce one of his works he usually makes arrangements with his publisher. This, of course, brings him at once to Milan in most cases.

More New Operas Should be Produced

It is, of course, difficult to gain an audience for a new work, but this is largely the fault of the public.

The managers are usually willing and glad to bring out novelties if the public can be found to appreciate them. *Madama Butterfly* is a novelty, but it leaped into immediate and enormous appreciation. Would that we could find a number like it! *Madama Butterfly's* success has been largely due to the fact that the work bears the direct evidences of inspiration. I was with Puccini in London when he saw for the first time John Luther Long's story, dramatized by a Belasco, produced in the form of a one-act play. He had a number of librettos under consideration at that time, but he cast them all aside at once. I never knew Puccini to be more excited. The story of the little Japanese piece was on his mind all the time. He could not seem to get away from it. It was in this white heat of inspiration that the piece was moulded. Operas do not come out of the "nowhere." They are born of the artistic enthusiasm and intellectual exuberance of the trained composer.

America's Musical Future

One of the marvelous conditions of music in this country is that the opera, the concert, the oratorio and the recital all seem to meet with equal appreciation. The fact that most students of music in this land play the piano has opened the avenues leading to an appreciation of orchestral scores. In the case of opera the condition was quite different. The appreciation of operatic music demands the voice of the trained artist and this could not be brought to the home until the

sound reproducing machine had been perfected. The great increase in the interest in opera in recent years is doubtless due to the fact that thousands and thousands of those instruments are in use in as many homes and music studios. It is far past the "toy" stage, and is a genuine factor in the art development and musical education of America. At first the sound reproducing machine met with tremendous opposition owing to the fact that bad instruments and poorer records had prejudiced the public, but now they have reached a condition whereby the voice is reflected with astonishing veracity. The improvements I have observed during the past years have seemed altogether wonderful to me. The thought that half a century hence the voices of our great singers of to-day may be heard in the homes of all countries of the globe gives a sense of satisfaction to the singer, since it gives a permanence to his art which was inconceivable twentv-five years ago.



HENRI SCOTT.

HENRI SCOTT

Biographical

Henri Scott was born at Coatesville, Pa., April 8, 1876. He was intended for a business career but became interested in music, at first in an amateur way, in Philadelphia. Encouraged by local successes he went to study voice with Oscar Saenger, remaining with him for upward of eleven years. He was fortunate in making appearances with the "Philadelphia Operatic Society," a remarkable amateur organization giving performances of grand opera on a large scale. With this organization he made his first stage appearances as Ramphis in *Aïda*, in 1897. He had his passage booked for Europe, where he was assured many fine appearances, when he accidentally met Oscar Hammerstein, who engaged him for five years. Under this manager he made his professional début as Ramphis at the Manhattan Opera House in New York, in 1909. Hammerstein, a year thereafter, terminated his New York performances by selling out to the Metropolitan Opera Company. Mr. Scott then went to Rome, where he made his first appearance in *Faust*, with great success. He was immediately engaged for the Chicago Opera Company where, during three years, he sang some thirty-five different rôles. In 1911 he was engaged as a leading basso by the Metropolitan, where he remained for many seasons. He has sung on tour with the Thomas Orchestra, with Caruso and at many famous festivals. He has appeared with success in over one hundred cities in the United States and Canada. In response to many offers he went into vaudeville, where he has sung to hundreds of thousands of Americans, with immense success. Mr. Scott is therefore in a position to speak of this new and interesting phase of bringing musical masterpieces to "the masses."

THE SINGER'S LARGER MUSICAL PUBLIC

HENRI SCOTT

Like every American, I resent the epithet, "the masses," because I have always considered myself a part of that mysterious unbounded organization of people to which all democratic Americans feel that they belong. One who is not a member of the masses in America is perforce a "snob" and a "prig." Possibly one of the reasons why our republic has survived so many years is that all true Americans are aristocratic, not in the attitude of "I am as good as everyone," but yet human enough to feel deep in their hearts, "Any good citizen is as good as I."

Why Grand Opera is Expensive

Music in America should be the property of everybody. The talking machines come near making it that, if one may judge from the sounds that come from half the homes at night. But the people want to hear the best music from living performers "in the flesh." At the same time, comparatively, very few can pay from two to twenty dollars a seat to hear great opera and great singers. The reason why grand opera costs so much is that the really fine voices, with trained operatic experience, are very, very few; and, since only a few performances are given a year, the price must be high. It is simply the law of supply and demand.

There are, in America, two large grand opera companies and half a dozen traveling ones, some of them very excellent. There are probably twenty large symphony orchestras and at least one hundred oratorio societies of size. To say that these bodies and others purveying good music, reach more than five million auditors a year would possibly be a generous figure. But five million is not one-twentieth of the population of America. What about the nineteen-twentieths?

On the other hand, there are in America between two and three thousand good vaudeville and moving picture houses where the best music in some form is heard not once or twice a week for a short season, but several times each day. Some of the moving picture houses have orchestras of thirty-five to eighty men, selected from musicians of the finest ability, many of whom have played in some of the greatest orchestras of the world. These orchestras and the talking machines are doing more to bring good music to the public than all the larger organizations, if we consider the subject from a standpoint of numbers.

A Revolution in Taste

The whole character of the entertainments in moving picture and vaudeville theaters has been revolutionized. The buildings are veritable temples of art. The class of the entertainment is constantly improving in response to a demand which the business instincts of the managers cannot fail to recognize. The situation is simply this: The American people, with their wonder-

ful thirst for self-betterment, which has brought about the prodigious success of the educational papers, the schools and the Chautauquas, like to have the beautiful things in art served to them with inspiriting amusement. We, as a people, have been becoming more and more refined in our tastes. We want better and better things, not merely in music, but in everything. In my boyhood there were thousands of families in fair circumstances who would endure having the most awful chromos upon their walls. These have for the most part entirely disappeared except in the homes of the newest aliens. It is true that much of our music is pretty raw in the popular field; but even in this it is getting better slowly and surely.

If in recent years there has been a revolution in the popular taste for vaudeville, B. F. Keith was the "Washington" of that revolution. He understood the human demand for clean entertainment, with plenty of healthy fun and an artistic background. He knew the public call for the best music and instilled his convictions in his able followers. Mr. Keith's attitude was responsible for the signs which one formerly saw in the dressing rooms of good vaudeville theaters, which read:

> **Profanity of any kind, objectionable or suggestive remarks, are forbidden in this theater. Offenders are liable to have the curtain rung down upon them during such an act.**

Fortunately these signs have now disappeared, as the actors have been so disciplined that they know that a coarse remark would injure them with the management.

Vaudeville is on a far higher basis than much so-called comic opera. Some acts are paid exceedingly large sums. Sarah Bernhardt received $7000.00 a week; Calve, Bispham, Kocian, Carolina White and Marguerite Sylvia, accordingly.

Dorothy Jordan, Bessie Abbott, Rosa Ponselle, Orville Harold and the recent Indian sensation at the Metropolitan, Chief Caupolican, actually had their beginnings in vaudeville. In other words, vaudeville was the stepping-stone to grand opera.

Singing for Millions

Success in this new field depends upon personality as well as art. It also develops personality. It is no place for a "stick." The singer must at all times be in human touch with the audience. The lofty individuals who are thinking far more about themselves than about the songs they are singing have no place here. The task is infinitely more difficult than grand opera. It is far more difficult than recital or oratorio singing. There can be no sham, no pose. The songs must please or the audience will let one know it in a second.

The wear and tear upon the voice is much less than in opera. During the week I sing in all three and one-half hours (not counting rehearsals). When I am singing Mephistopheles in *Faust* I am in a theater at

least six hours—the make-up alone requires at least one and one-half hours. Then time is demanded for rehearsals with the company and with various coaches.

The Art of "Putting it Over"

Thus the vaudeville singer who is genuinely interested in the progress of his art has ample time to study new songs and new rôles. In the jargon of vaudeville, everything is based upon whether the singer is able "to put the number over." This is a far more serious matter than one thinks. The audience is made up of the great public—the common people, God bless them. There is not the select gathering of musically cultured people that one finds in Carnegie Hall or the Auditorium. Therefore, in singing music that is admittedly a musical masterpiece, one must select only those works which may be interpreted with a broad human appeal. One is far closer to his fellow-man in vaudeville than in grand opera, because the emotions of the auditors are more responsive. It is intensely gratifying to know that these people want real art. My greatest success has been in Lieurance's Indian songs and in excerpts from grand opera. Upon one occasion my number was followed by that of a very popular comedienne whose performance was known to be of the farcical, rip-roaring type which vaudeville audiences were supposed to like above all things. It was my pleasure to be recalled, even after the curtain had ascended upon her performance, and to be compelled to give another song as an encore. The preference of the

vaudeville audience for really good music has been indicated to me time and again. But it is not merely the good music that draws: the music must be interpreted properly. Much excellent music is ruined in vaudeville by ridiculous renditions.

How to Get an Engagement

Singers have asked me time and again how to get an engagement. The first thing is to be sure that you have something to sell that is really worth while. Think of how many people are willing to pay to hear you sing! The more that they are willing to pay, the more valuable you are to the managers who buy your services. Therefore reputation, of course, is an important point to the manager. An unknown singer can not hope to get the same fee as the celebrated singer no matter how fine the voice or the art. Mr. E. Falber and Mr. Martin Beck, who have been responsible for a great many of the engagements of great artists in vaudeville and who are great believers in fine music in vaudeville, have, through their high position in business, helped hundreds. But they can not help anyone who has nothing to sell.

The home office of the big vaudeville exchange is at Forty-seventh and Broadway, N.Y., and it is one of the busiest places in the great city. Even at that, it has always been a mystery to me just how the thousands of numbers are arranged so that there will be as little loss as possible for the performers; for it must be remembered that the vaudeville artists buy their own

stage clothes and scenery, attend to their transportation and pay all their own expenses; unless they can afford the luxury of a personal manager who knows how to do these things just a little better.

The singer looking for an engagement must in some way do something to gain some kind of recognition. Perhaps it may come from the fact that the manager of the local theater in her town has heard her sing, or some well-known singer is interested in her and is willing to write a letter of introduction to someone influential in headquarters. With the enormous demands made upon the time of the "powers that be," it is hardly fair to expect them to hear anyone and everyone. With such a letter or such an introduction, arrange for an audition at the headquarters in New York. Remember all the time that if you have anything really worth while to sell the managers are just as anxious to hear you as you are to be heard. There is no occasion for nervousness.

Excellent Conditions

Sometimes the managers are badly mistaken. It is common gossip that a very celebrated opera singer sought a vaudeville engagement and was turned down because of the lack of the musical experience of the manager, and because she was unknown. If he wanted her to-day his figure would have to be several thousand dollars a week.

The average vaudeville theater in America is far better for the singer, in many ways, than many of the

opera houses. In fact the vaudeville theaters are new; while the opera houses are old, and often sadly run down and out of date. Possibly the finest vaudeville theater in America is in Providence, R. I., and was built by E. F. Albee. It is palatial in every aspect, built as strong and substantial as a fort, and yet as elegant as a mansion. It is much easier to sing in these modern theaters made of stone and concrete than in many of the old-fashioned opera houses. Indeed, some of the vaudeville audiences often hear a singer at far better advantage than in the opera house.

The singer who realizes the wonderful artistic opportunities provided in reaching such immense numbers of people, who will understand that he must sing up to the larger humanity rather than thinking that he must sing down to a mob, who will work to do better vocal and interpretative thinking at every successive performance, will lose nothing by singing in vaudeville and may gain an army of friends and admirers he could not otherwise possibly acquire.

EMMA THURSBY

Biographical

Emma Thursby was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., and studied singing with Julius Meyers, Achille Errani, Mme. Rudersdorf, Lamperti (elder), San Giovanni and finally with Maurice Strakosch. She began her career as a church singer in New York and throngs went to different New York churches to hear her exquisitely mellow and beautiful voice. For many years she was the soprano of the famous Plymouth Church when Henry Ward Beecher was the pastor. Her voice became so famous that she went on a tour with Maurice Strakosch for seven years, in Europe and America, everywhere meeting with sensational success. Later she toured with the Gilmore Band and with the Thomas Orchestra. She became as popular in London and in Paris as in New York. Her fame became so great that she finally made a tour of the world, appearing with great success even in China and Japan.



Emma Thursby.

SINGING IN CONCERT AND WHAT IT MEANS

EMMA THURSBY

Although conditions have changed very greatly since I was last regularly engaged in making concert tours, the change has been rather one of advantage to young singers than one to their disadvantage. The enormous advance in musical taste can only be expressed by the word "startling." For while we have apparently a vast amount of worthless music being continually inoculated into our unsuspecting public, we have, nevertheless, a corresponding cultivation of the love for good music which contributes much to the support of the concert singer of the present day.

The old time lyceum has almost disappeared, but the high-class song recital has taken its place and recitals that would have been barely possible years ago are now frequently given with greatest financial and artistic success. Schumann, Franz, Strauss, Grieg and MacDowell have conquered the field formerly held by the vapid and meaningless compositions of brainless composers who wrote solely to amuse or to appeal to morbid sentimentality.

The conditions of travel, also, have been greatly improved. It is now possible to go about in railroad cars and stop at hotels, and at the same time experience very little inconvenience and discomfort. This makes

the career of the concert artist a far more desirable one than in former years. Uninviting hotels, frigid cars, poorly prepared meals and the lack of privacy were scarcely the best things to stimulate a high degree of musical inspiration.

Health

Nevertheless, the girl who would be successful in concert must either possess or acquire good health as her first and all-essential asset. Notwithstanding the marvelous improvement in traveling facilities and accommodations, the nervous strain of public performance is not lessened, and it not infrequently happens that these very facilities enable the avaricious manager to crowd in more concerts and recitals than in former years, with the consequent strain upon the vitality of the singer.

Of course, the singer must also possess the foundation for a good natural voice, a sense of hearing capable of being trained to the keenest perception of pitch, quality, rhythm and metre, an attractive personality, a bright mind, a good general education and an artistic temperament—a very extraordinary list, I grant you, but we must remember that the public pays out its money to hear extraordinary people and the would-be singer who does not possess qualifications of this description had better sincerely solicit the advice of some experienced, unbiased teacher or singer before putting forth upon the musical seas in a bark which must meet with certain destruction in weathering the

first storm. The teacher who consciously advises a singer to undertake a public career and at the same time knows that such a career would very likely be a failure is beneath the recognition of any honest man or woman.

The Singer's Early Training

The education of the singer should not commence too early, if we mean by education the training of the voice. If you discover that a child has a very remarkable voice, "ear" and musical intelligence you had better let the voice alone and give your attention to the general musical education of the child along the lines of that received by Madame Sembrich, who is a fine violinist and pianist. So few are the teachers who know anything whatever about the child-voice, or who can treat it with any degree of safety, that it is far better to leave it alone than to tamper with it. Encourage the child to sing softly, sweetly and naturally, much as in free fluent conversation, telling him to form the habit of speaking his tones forward "on the lips" rather than in the throat. If you have among your acquaintances some musician or singer of indisputable ability and impeccable honor who can give you disinterested advice have the child go to this friend now and then to ascertain whether any bad and unnatural habits are being formed. Of course we have the famous cases of Patti and others, who seem to have sung from infancy. I have no recollection of the time

when I first commenced to sing. I have always sung and gloried in my singing.

See to it that your musical child has a good general education. This does not necessarily mean a college or university training. In fact, the amount of music study a singer has to accomplish in these days makes the higher academic training apparently impossible. However, with the great musical advance there has come a demand for higher and better ordered intellectual work among singers. This condition is becoming more and more imperative every day. At the same time you must remember also that nothing should be undertaken that might in any way be liable to undermine or impair the child's health.

When to Begin Training

The time to begin training depends upon the maturity of the voice and the individual, considered together with the physical condition of the pupil. Some girls are ready to start voice work at sixteen, while others are not really in condition until a somewhat older age. Here again comes the necessity for the teacher of judgment and experience. A teacher who might in any way be influenced by the necessity for securing a pupil or a fee should be avoided as one avoids the shyster lawyer. Starting vocal instruction too early has been the precipice over which many a promising career has been dashed to early oblivion.

In choosing a teacher I hardly know what to say, in these days of myriad methods and endless claims.

The greatest teachers I have known have been men and women of great simplicity and directness. The perpetrator of the complicated system is normally the creator of vocal failures. The secret of singing is at once a marvelous mystery and again an open secret to those who have realized its simplicity. It cannot be altogether written, nor can it be imparted by words alone. Imitation undoubtedly plays an important part, but it is not everything. The teacher must be one who has actually realized the great truths which underlie the best, simplest and most natural methods of securing results and who must possess the wonderful power of exactly communicating these principles to the pupil. A good teacher is far rarer than a good singer. Singers are often poor teachers, as they destroy the individuality of the pupil by demanding arbitrary imitation. A teacher can only be judged by results, and the pupil should never permit herself to be deluded by advertisements and claims a teacher is unable to substantiate with successful pupils.

Habits of Speech, Poise and Thinking

One of the deep foundation piers of all educational effort is the inculcation of habits. The most successful voice teacher is the one who is most happy in developing habits of correct singing. These habits must be watched with the persistence, perseverance and affectionate care of the scientist. The teacher must realize that the single lapse or violation of a habit may mean the ruin of weeks or months of hard work.

One of the most necessary habits a teacher should form is that of speaking with ease, naturalness and vocal charm. Many of our American girls speak with indescribable harshness, slovenliness and shrillness. This is a severe tax upon the sensibilities of a musical person and I know of countless people who suffer acute annoyance from this source. Vowels are emitted with a nasal twang or a throaty growl that seem at times most unpardonable noises when coming from a pretty face. Consonants are juggled and mangled until the words are very difficult to comprehend. Our girls are improving in this respect, but there is still cause for grievous complaint among voice teachers, who find in this one of their most formidable obstacles.

Another common natural fault, which is particularly offensive to me, is that of an objectionable bodily poise. I have found throughout my entire career that bodily poise in concert work is of paramount importance, but I seem to have great difficulty in sufficiently impressing this great truth upon young ladies who would be singers. The noted Parisian teacher, Sbriglia, is said to require one entire year to build up and fortify the chest. I have always felt that the best poise is that in which the shoulders are held well back, although not in a stiff or strained position, the upper part of the body leaning forward gently and naturally and the whole frame balanced by a sense of relaxation and ease. In this position the natural equilibrium is not taxed, and a peculiar sensation of non-constraint seems to be noticeable, particularly over the entire area

of the front of the torso. This position suggests ease and an absence of that military rigidity which is so fatal to all good vocal effort. It also permits of a freer movement of the abdominal walls, as well as the intercostal muscles, and is thus conducive to the most natural breathing. Too much anatomical explanation is liable to confuse the young singer, and if the matter of breathing can be assisted by poise, just so much is gained.

Another important habit that the teacher should see to at the start is that of correct thinking. Most vocal beginners are poor thinkers and fail to realize the vast importance of the mind in all voice work. Unless the teacher has the power of inspiring the pupil to a realization of the great fact that nothing is accomplished in the throat that has not been previously performed in the mind, the path will be a difficult one. During the process of singing the throat and the auxiliary vocal process of breathing are really a part of the brain, or, more specifically, the mind or soul. The body is never more than an instrument. Without the performer it is as voiceless as the piano of Richard Wagner standing in all its solitary silence at Wahnfried—a mute monument of the marvelous thoughts which once rang from its vibrating wires to all parts of the civilized world. We really sing with that which leaves the body after death. It is in the cultivation of this mystery of mysteries, the soul, that most singers fail. The mental ideal is, after all, that which makes the singer. Patti possessed this ideal as a child, and with it the wonder-

ful bodily qualifications which made her immortal. But it requires work to overcome vocal deficiencies, and Patti as a child was known to have been a ceaseless worker and thinker, always trying to bring her little body up to the high æsthetic appreciation of the best artistic interpretation of a given passage.

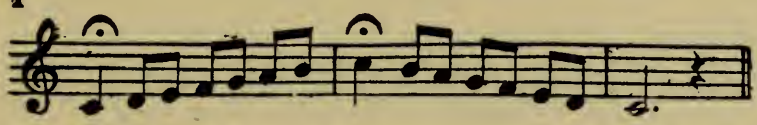
Maurice Strakosch's Ten Vocal Commandments

It was from Maurice Strakosch that I learned of the methods pursued by Patti in her daily work, and although Strakosch was not a teacher in the commercial sense of the word, as he had comparatively few pupils, he was nevertheless a very fine musician, and there is no doubt that Patti owed a great deal to his careful and insistent régime and instruction. Although our relation was that of impresario and artist, I cannot be grateful enough to him for the advice and instruction I received from him. The technical exercises he employed were exceedingly simple and he gave more attention to how they were sung than to the exercises themselves. I know of no more effective set of exercises than Strakosch's ten daily exercises. They were sung to the different vowels, principally to the vowel "ah," as in "father." Notwithstanding their great simplicity Strakosch gave the greatest possible attention and time to them. Patti used these exercises, which he called his "Ten Commandments for the Singer," daily, and there can be little doubt that the extraordinary preservation of her voice is the result of these simple means. I have used them for years with

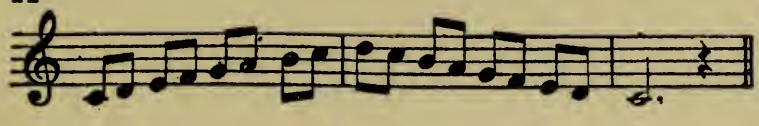
exceptional results in all cases. However, if the singer has any idea that the mere practice of these exercises to the different vowel sounds will inevitably bring success she is greatly mistaken. These exercises are only valuable when used with vowels correctly and naturally "placed," and that means, in some cases, years of the most careful and painstaking work.

Following are the famous "Ten Vocal Commandments," as used by Adelina Patti and several great singers in their daily work. Note their simplicity and gradual increase in difficulty. They are to be transposed at the teacher's discretion to suit the range of the voice and are to be used with the different vowels.

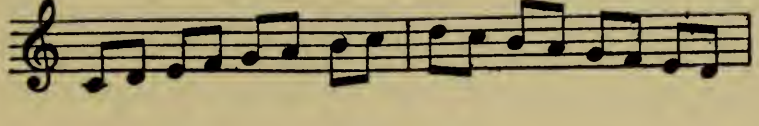
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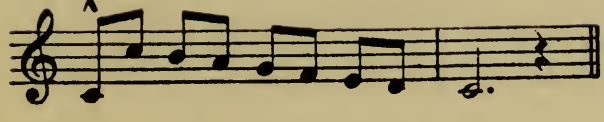


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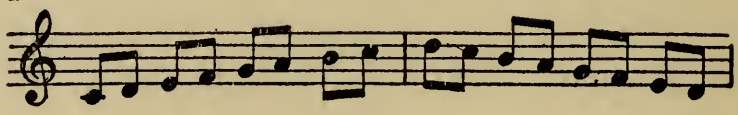


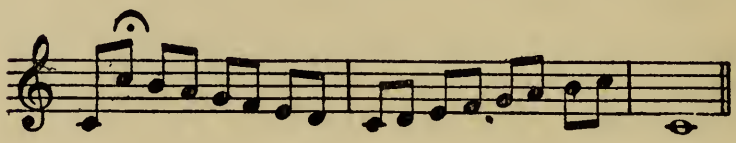
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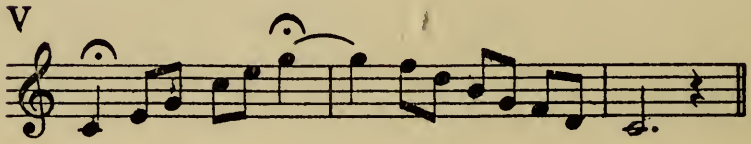


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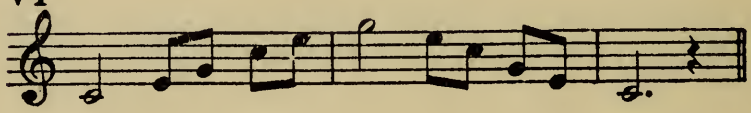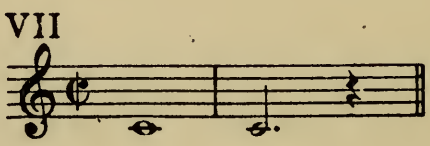




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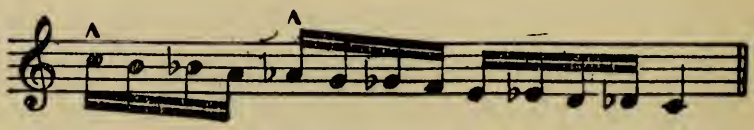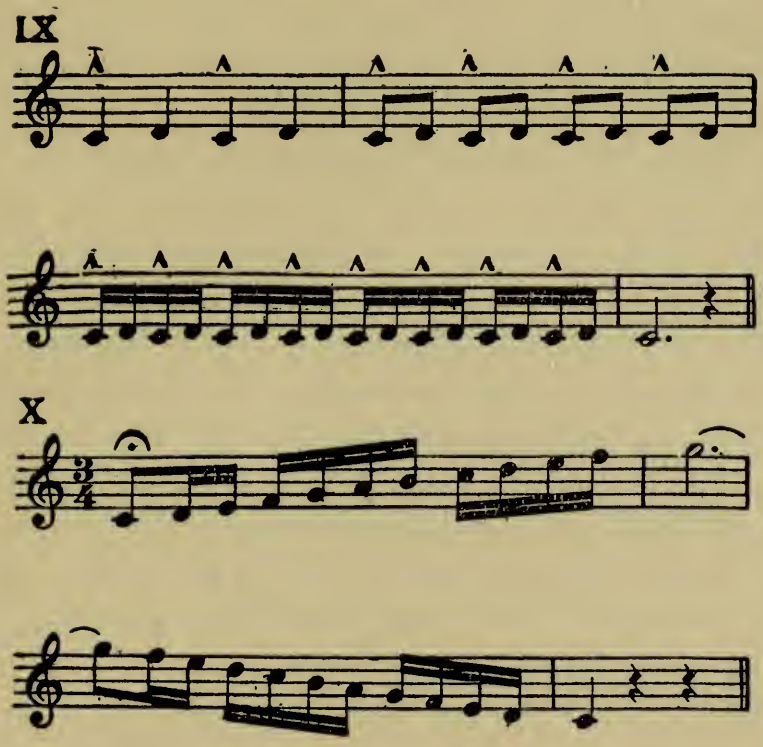


VII



VIII







The concert singer of the present day must have linguistic attainments far greater than those in demand some years ago. She is required to sing in English, French, German, Italian and some singers are now attempting the interpretation of songs in Slavic and other tongues. Not only do we have to consider arias and passages from the great oratorios and operas as a part of the present-day repertoire, but the song of the "Lied" type has come to have a valuable significance in all concert work. Many songs intended for the chamber and the salon are now included in programs of concerts and recitals given in our largest auditoriums. Only a very few numbers are in themselves

songs written for the concert hall. Most of the numbers now sung at song concerts are really transplanted from either the stage or the chamber. This makes the position of the concert singer an extremely difficult one. Without the dramatic accessories of the opera house or the intimacy of the home circle, she is expected to achieve results varying from the cry of the Valkyries, in *Die Walküre*, to the frail fragrance of Franz' *Es hat die Rose sich beklagt.* I do not wonder that Mme. Schumann-Heink and others have declared that there is nothing more difficult or exhausting than concert singing. The enormous fees paid to great concert singers are not surprising when we consider how very few must be the people who can ever hope to attain great heights in this work.



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REINALD WERRENRATH.

REINALD WERRENRATH

Biographical

Reinald Werrenrath was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., August 7, 1883. His father, George Werrenrath, was a distinguished singer, and his mother (née Aretta Camp) is the daughter of Henry Camp, who was for many years musical director of Plymouth Church during the ministry there of Henry Ward Beecher. George Werrenrath was a Dane, with an unusually rich tenor voice, trained by the best teachers of his time in Germany, Italy, France and England. During his engagement as leading tenor in the Royal Opera House in Wiesbaden, he left Germany by the advice of Adelina Patti, eventually going to England with Maurice Strakosch, who was then his coach. In London Werrenrath had a fine career, and there was formed a warm and intimate friendship with Charles Gounod, with whom he studied and toured in concerts through England and Belgium. George Werrenrath came to New York in 1876, by the influence of Mme. Antoinette Sterling and of the well-known Dane, General C. T. Christensen. He immediately became well known by his appearance with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, as well as by his engagement at Plymouth Church, where he was soloist for seven years. He was probably the first artist to give song-recitals in the United States, while his performances in opera are still cherished in the memories of those people who can look back on some of the fine representations given under the baton of Adolph Neuendorf, at the old Academy of Music, which made the way for the later

work at the Metropolitan Opera House. His interpretation of *Lohengrin* was adjudged most wonderfully poetical.

Reinald Werrenrath studied first with his father. At the Boys' High School and at New York University he was leader of musical affairs throughout the eight years spent in those schools. He studied violin with Carl Venth for four years, and had as his vocal teachers Dr. Carl Dufft, Frank King Clark, Dr. Arthur Mees, Percy Rector Stephens and Victor Maurel, giving especial credit for his voice training to years of study with Mr. Stephens whose vocal teaching ideas he sketches in part in the following. He has appeared with immense success in concert and oratorio in all parts of the United States. His talking machine records have been in great demand for years, and his voice is known to thousands who have never seen him. His operatic début was in *Pagliacci*, as *Silvio*, in the Metropolitan Opera House, February 19, 1919, where he later had specially fine success as *Valentine* in *Faust* and as the *Toreador* in *Carmen*.

NEW ASPECTS OF THE ART OF SINGING IN AMERICA

REINALD WERRENRATH

Every now and then someone asks me whether America is really becoming musical. All I can say is that a year ago I, with my accompanist, traveled over 61,000 miles, touching every part of this country and, during that eight months, singing almost nightly when the transit facilities would permit, found everywhere the very greatest enthusiasm for the very best music. Of course, Americans want some numbers on the program with the so-called "human" element; but at the same time they court the best in vocal art and seem never to get enough of it. All of my instruction has been received in America. All of my teachers, with the exception of my father and Victor Maurel, were born in America; so I may be called very much of an American product.

Just why Americans should ever have been obsessed with the idea that it was impossible to teach voice successfully on this side of the Atlantic is hard to tell. I have a suspicion that many like the adventure of foreign travel far more than the labor of study. Probably ninety-five per cent. of the pupils who went over did so for the fascinating experience of living in a European environment rather than for the downright pur-

pose of coming back great artists. Therefore, we should not blame the European teachers altogether for the countless failures that have floated back to us almost on every tide. I have recently heard a report that many of the highest-priced and most efficient voice teachers in Italy are Americans who have Italianized their names. Certainly the most successful voice teachers in Berlin were George Ferguson and Frank King Clark, who was at the top of the list also in Paris when he was there.

The American singer should remember in these days that, first of all, he must sing in America and in the English language more than in any other. I am not one of those who decry singing in foreign languages. Certain songs, it is true, cannot be translated so that their meaning can be completely understood in English; yet, if the reader will think for a moment, how is the American auditor to understand a single thought of a poem in a language of which he knows nothing?

The Italian is a glorious language for the singer, and with it English cannot be compared, with its thirty-one vowel sounds and its many coughing, sputtering consonants. Training in Italian solfeggios is very fine for creating a free, flowing style. Many of the Italian teachers were obsessed with the idea of the big tone. The audiences fired back volleys of "Bravos!" and "Da Capos" when the tenor took off his plumed hat, stood on his toes and howled a high C. That was part of his stock in trade. Naturally, he forced his voice, and most of the men singers quit at the age of fifty.

I hope to be in my prime at that time, as my voice seems to grow better each year. Battistini, who was born in 1857, is an exception. His voice, I am told, is remarkably preserved.

Climatic Conditions a Serious Handicap

Climatic conditions in many parts of America prove a serious handicap to the singer. At the same time, according to the law of the survival of the fittest, American singers must take care of themselves much better than the Italians, for instance. The salubrious, balmy climate of most of Italy is ideal for the throat. On our Eastern seaboard I find that fifty per cent. of my audiences in winter seem to have colds and bronchitis. The singer who is obliged to tour must, of course, take every possible precaution against catching cold; and that means becoming infected from exposure to colds when the system is run down. I attempt to avoid colds by securing plenty of outdoor exercise. I always walk to my hotel and to the station when I have time; and I walk as much as I can during the day. When I am not singing I immediately start to play—to fish, swim or hunt in the woods if I can make an opportunity.

Operatic Study

In one respect Europe is unquestionably superior to America for the vocal student. The student who wants to sing in opera will find in Europe ten opportunities for gaining experience to one here. While we have a

few more opera companies than twenty-five years ago, it is still a great task to secure even an opening. Americans, outside of the great cities, do not seem to be especially inclined toward opera. They will accept a little of it when it is given to them by a superb company like the Metropolitan. In New York we find a public more cosmopolitan than in any other city of the world, with the possible exception of London. In immediate ancestry it is more European than American, and naturally opera becomes a great public demand. Seats sell at fabulous prices and the houses are crowded. Next comes opera at popular prices; and we have one or two very good companies giving that with success. Then there is the opera in America's other cosmopolitan center, Chicago, where many world-famed artists appear. After that, opera in America is hardly worth mentioning. What chance has the student? Only one who for years has been uniformed in a black dress suit and backed into the curve of the grand piano in a recital hall can know what it means to get out on the operatic stage, in those fantastic clothes, walk around, act, sing and at the same time watch the conductor with his ninety men. Only he can know what the difference between singing in concert and on the operatic stage really is. Yet old opera singers who enter the recital field invariably say that it is far harder to get up alone in a large hall and become the whole performance, aided and abetted only by an able accompanist, than it is to sing in opera.

The recital has the effect of preserving the fineness

of many operatic voices. Modern opera has ruined dozens of fine vocal organs because of the tremendous strain made upon them and the tendency to neglect vocal art for dramatic impression.

If there were more of the better *singing* in opera, such as one hears from Mr. Caruso, there would be less comment upon opera as a bastard art. Operatic work is very exhilarating. The difference between concert and opera for the singer is that between oatmeal porridge and an old vintage champagne. There is no time at the Metropolitan for raw singers. The works in the repertoire must be known so well in the singing and the acting that they may be put on perfectly with the least possible rehearsals. Therefore, the singer has no time for routine. The lack of a foreign name will keep no American singer out of the Metropolitan; but the lack of the ability to save the company hundreds of dollars through needless waits at rehearsals will.

Natural Methods of Singing

Certainly no country in recent years has produced so many "corking" good singers as America. Our voices are fresh, virile, pure and rich; when the teaching is right. Our singers are for the most part finely educated and know how to interpret the texts intelligently. Mr. W. J. Henderson, the eminent New York critic, in his "Art of Singing," gave the following definition, which my former teacher, the late Dr. Carl Dufft, endorsed very highly: "Singing is the expression of a text by means of tones made by the human voice."

More and more the truth of this comes to me. Singing is not merely vocalizing but always a means of communication in which the artist must convey the message of the two great minds of the poet and the composer to his fellow man. In this the voice must be as natural as possible, as human as possible, and not merely a sugary tone. The German, the Frenchman, the Englishman and the American strive first for an intelligent interpretation of the text. The Italian thinks of tone first and the text afterward, except in the modern Italian school of realistic singing. For this one must consider the voice normally and sensibly.

I owe my treatment of my voice largely to Mr. Stephens, with whom I have studied for the last eight years, taking a lesson every day I am in New York. This is advisable, I believe, because no matter how well one may think one sings, another trained mind with other ears may detect defects that might lead to serious difficulties later. His methods are difficult to describe; but a few main principles may be very interesting to vocalists.

My daily work in practice is commenced by stretching exercises, in which I aim to free the muscles covering the upper part of the abdomen and the intercostal muscles at the side and back—all by stretching upward and writhing around, as it were, so that there cannot possibly be any constriction. Then, with my elbows bent and my fists over my head, I stretch the muscles over my shoulders and shoulder blades. Finally, I rotate my head upward and around, so that

the muscles of the neck are freed and become very easy and flexible. While I am finishing with the last exercise I begin speaking in a fairly moderate tone such vowel combinations as "OH-AH," "OH-AH," "EE-AY," "EE-AY," "EE-AY-EE-AY-EE-AY," etc. While doing this I walk about the room so that there will not be any suggestion of stiltedness or vocal or muscular interference. At first this is done without the addition of any attempted nasal resonance. Gradually nasal resonance is introduced with different spoken vowels, while at the same time every effort is made to preserve ease and flexibility of the entire body. Then, when it seems as though the right vocal quality is coming, pitch is introduced at the most convenient range and exercises with pitch are taken through the range of the voice. The whole idea is to make the tones as natural and free and pure as possible with the least effort. I am opposed to the old idea of tone placing, in which the pupil toed a mark, set the throat at some prescribed angle, adjusted the tongue in some approved design, and then, gripped like the unfortunate victim in the old-fashioned photographer's irons, attempted to sing a sustained tone or a rapid scale. What was the result—consciousness and stiltedness and, as a rule, a tired throat and a ruined singer. These ideas may seem revolutionary to many. They are only a few of Mr. Stephens' very numerous devices; but for many years they have been of more benefit than anything else in keeping me vocally fit.

We in the New World should be on the outlook for

advance along all lines. Our American composers have held far too close to European ideals and done too little real thinking for themselves. Our vocal teachers and, for that matter, teachers in all branches of musical art in America have been most progressive in devising new ways and better methods. There will never be an American method of singing because we are too wise not to realize that every pupil needs different and special treatment. What is fine for one might be injurious to the next one.



Evan Williams.

EVAN WILLIAMS

Biographical

Evan Williams, as his name suggests, was of Welsh ancestry, although born in Trumbull County, Ohio, Sept. 7, 1867. As a boy his singing attracted the attention of his friends and neighbors. When a young man he went to Mme. Louise von Fielitsen, in Cleveland, and studied under her for four years. At the end of this time it became necessary for him to earn money immediately, as he had married at the age of twenty. Accordingly he went with the "Primrose and West" minstrels for one season. Everywhere he appeared his voice attracted enthusiastic attention. This aroused his ambition and in 1894 he went to New York where he was engaged at All Angels Church at a yearly salary of $1000.00. Six months later the Marble Collegiate Church took him over at $1500.00 which was shortly raised to $2000.00. In 1896 he appeared at the Worcester Festival with great success and then went to New York to study with James Sauvage for three years.

Notwithstanding his long terms of instruction with teachers of high reputation, Mr. Williams felt that he had still much to learn, as he would find himself singing finely one night and so badly on the next that he would resolve never to sing again. Accordingly he studied with Meehan for three years more. Then he retired from the concert stage for three years in order to improve himself. Deciding to appear in public again he went to London where he sang for three years with popular success. However, he was still dissatisfied with his voice. Mr. Williams' personal narrative tells how he got his voice back. His death, May 24, 1918, prevented him from carrying out his project to become a teacher and thus introduce his discoveries. The following, therefore, becomes of interesting historical significance.

HOW I REGAINED A LOST VOICE

EVAN WILLIAMS

There is nothing so disquieting to the singer as the feeling that his voice, upon which his artistic hopes, to say nothing of his livelihood, depend, is not a reliable organ, but a fickle thing which to-day may be in splendid condition but to-morrow may be gone. Time and again I have been driven to the verge of desperation by my own voice. While I am grateful to all of my excellent teachers for the many valuable things they taught me, I had a strong feeling that there was something which I must know and which only I myself could find out for myself. After a very wide experience here and in England I found myself with so little confidence in my ability to produce uniformly excellent results when on the concert stage, that I retired to Akron, Ohio, resolving to spend the rest of my life in teaching. There I remained for four years, thinking out the great problem that confronted me. It is only during the last year that I have become convinced that I have solved it. My musical work has made me well-to-do and I want now to give my ideas to the world so that others may profit if they find them valuable. I have nothing to sell—but I trust that I can put into words, without inventing a new and bewildering

nomenclature, something that will prove of practical assistance to young singers as it has been to me.

An Indisputable Record

In 1908 I left Akron and resolved to try to reinstate myself in New York as a singer. I also made talking machine records, only to find that seldom could I make a record at the first attempt that was up to the very high standard maintained by the company in the case of all records placed upon the market for sale. This meant a great waste of my time and the company's material and services. It naturally set me thinking. If I could do it one time—why couldn't I do it all the time? There was no contradicting the talking machine record. The machine records the slightest blemish as well as the most perfect tone. There was no getting away from the fact that sometimes my singing was far from what I wished it to be.

The strange thing about it all was that my singing did not seem to depend upon the physical condition or feeling of my throat. Some days when my throat felt at its very best the records would come back in a way that I was ashamed of. It is a strange feeling to hear one's own voice from the talking machine. It sounds quite differently from the impression one gets while singing. I began to ponder, why were some of my records poor and others good?

After deep thought for a very long period of time, I commenced to make certain postulates which I believe I have since proved (to my own satisfaction at least)

to be reasonable and true. They not only resulted in an improvement in my voice, but they enabled me to do at command what I had previously been able to do only occasionally. They are:

I. Tone creates its own support.
II. Much of the time spent in elaborate breathing exercises (while excellent for the health and valuable to the singer, in a way) do not produce the results that are expected.
III. The singer's first studies should be with his brain and ear, rather than through an attempt at muscular control of the breathing muscles.
IV. Vocal resonance can be developed through a proper understanding of tone color(vocal timbre), so that uniformly excellent production of tones will result.

Tone Creates Its Own Support

The first two postulates can be discussed as one. Tone creates its own support. How does a bird learn to sing? How does the animal learn to cry? How does the lion learn to roar? Or the donkey learn to bray? By practicing breathing exercises? Most certainly not. I have known many, many singers with splendid voices who have never heard of breathing exercises. Go out into the Welsh mining districts and listen to the voices. They learn to breathe by learning how to sing, and by singing. These men have lungs that the average vocal student would give a fortune to possess. By singing correctly they acquire all the lung control that any vocal composition could demand.

As a matter of fact, one does not need such a huge amount of breath to sing. The average singer uses entirely too much. A goose has lungs ten times as large as a nightingale but that doesn't make the goose's song lovely to listen to. I have known men with lungs big enough to work a blast furnace who yet had little bits of voices, so small that they were ridiculous. It would be better for most vocal students to emit the breath for five seconds before attacking the tone. One of the reasons for much vocal forcing is too much breath. Maybe I haven't thought about these things! I have spent hours in silence making up my mind. It is my firm conviction that the average person (entirely without instruction in breathing of a special kind) has enough breath to sing any phrase one might be called upon to sing. I think, without question, that teachers and singers have all been working their heads off to develop strength in the wrong direction. Mind you—this is not a sermon against breathing. I believe in plenty of breathing exercises for the sake of one's health.

A Good Position

Singers study breathing as though they were trying to learn how to push out the voice or pull it out by suction. By standing in a sensible position with the chest high (but not forced up) the lung capacity of the average individual is quite surprising. A good position can be secured through the old Delsarte exercise which is as follows:

I. Stand on the balls of your feet, heels just touching the floor.

II. Hold your arms at your side in a relaxed condition.

III. Move your arms forward until they form an angle of forty-five degrees with the body. Press the palms down until the chest is up comfortably.

IV. Now let your arms drop back without letting your chest fall. Feel a sense of ease and freedom over the whole body. Breathe naturally and deeply.

In other words, to "poise" the breath, stand erect, at attention. Most people when called to this "attention" posture stiffen themselves so that they are in a position of resistance. When I say *attention*,—I mean the position in which you have alertness but at the same time complete freedom,—when you can freely smile, sigh, scowl and sneer,—the attention that will permit expansion of the chest with every change of mood. Then, open the mouth without inhaling. Let the breath out for five seconds, close the mouth and inhale through the nostrils. I keep the fact that I breathe into the lungs through the nostrils before me all the time. Again open the mouth without allowing the air to pass in. Practice this until a comfortable stretch is felt in the flesh of the face, the top of the head, the back, the chest and the abdomen. If you stretch violently you will not experience this feeling.

Sensations

I fully realize that much of what I have said will not be in accord with what is preached, practiced and taught by many vocal teachers and I cannot attempt to reply to any critics. I merely know what sensations and experiences I have had after a lifetime of practical work in a profession which has brought me a fortune. Furthermore I know that anything anyone might say on the subject of the human voice would be at variance with the opinions of others. There is probably no subject in human ken in which there is such a marked difference of opinion. I can merely try to describe my own sensations and vocal experiences. In trying to represent the course of the sensation I experience in producing a good tone, I have employed the following illustration. Imagine two pieces of whip cord. Tie the ends together. Place the knot immediately under the upper lip directly beneath the center bone of the nose, run the strings straight back for an inch, then up over the cheek bones, then down around the uvula, thence down the large cords inside the neck. At a point in the center between the shoulders the cords would split in order to let one set go down the back and the other toward the chest, meeting again under the arm-pits, thence down the short ribs, thence down and joining in another knot slightly back of the pelvic bone. Laugh, if you will, but this is actually the sensation I have repeatedly felt in producing what the talking machine has shown to be a good tone. Remember

that there were plenty to laugh at Columbus, Gallileo and even Darius Green of the Flying Machine.

Stand in "attention" as directed, with the body responsive and the mind sensitive to physical impressions. When opening the mouth without taking in air a slight stretch will be experienced along the whole track I have described. The poise felt in this position is what permitted Bob Fitzsimmons to strike a deadly blow with a two-inch stroke. It is the responsive poise with which I sing both loud and soft tones. Furthermore, I do not believe in an absolutely relaxed lower jaw as though it had been broken. Who could sing with a broken jaw?—and a broken jaw would represent ideal relaxation. The jaw should be slightly stretched but never strained. I think that the word relaxation, as used by most teachers and as understood by most students, is responsible for more ruined voices than all other terms used in vocal teaching. I have talked this matter over with numberless great singers who are constantly before the public, and their very singing is the best contradiction of this. When you hold your hand out freely before you what is it that keeps it from falling at your side? That same condition controls the jaw. Find it: it is not relaxation. If you would be a perfect singer find the juggler who is balancing a feather. Imagine yourself poised on the top of that feather, and sing without falling off.

Contrasting Timbres that Lead to a Beautiful Tone When Combined

We shall now seek to illustrate two contrasting qualities of tones, between which lies that quality which I sought for so long. The desired quality is not a compromise, but seems to be located half way between two extremes, and may best be brought to the attention of the reader by describing the extremes.

The first is a dark quality of tone. To get this, place the tips of the second fingers on the sides of the voice box (Adam's apple) and make a dark almost breathy sound, using "u" as in the word hum. Do this without any signs of strain. Allow the sound to float up into the mouth and nose. To many there will also be a sensation as though the sound were also floating down into the lungs (into both lungs). Do not make any conscious effort to force the sound or place it in any particular location. The sound will do it of its own accord if you do not strain. While the sound is being made, there will be a slight upward pulling of the voice box, a slight tugging at the voice box. This, of course, occurs automatically, and there should be no attempt to control it or promote it. It is nature at work. The tongue, while making this sound, should be limp, with the tip resting on the lower front teeth. All along it is necessary to caution the singer not to strive to do artificial things. Therefore do not poke or stick the tip of your tongue against the front teeth. If your tongue is not strained it will rest

there naturally. Work at this exercise until you can fill the mouth and nose (and also seemingly the chest) with a rich, smooth, well-controlled, well-modulated dark sound and do it easily,—with slight effort. Do not try to hold the sound in the throat.

The second sound we shall experiment with is the extreme antithesis of the first sound. Its resonance is high and it is bright in every sense. Place the fingers on the joints just in front and above holes in the ears. Open the mouth without inhaling and make the sound of "e" as in when. As the dark sound described before cannot be made too dark this sound cannot be made too strident. It is the extreme from the rumble of the drum to the piercing rasp of the file. I have called it the animal sound, and in calling it strident, please do not infer that the nose, or any part of the mouth or soft palate, should be pinched to make it nasal, in the restricted sense of that term. When I sing this tone it is accompanied with a sensation as though the tone were being reflected downward from the voice box over to each side of the chest just in front of the arm-pits and then downward into the abdomen. Here the great danger arises that the unskilled student will try to produce this sensation, whereas the fact of the matter is that the sensation is the accompaniment of the properly produced tone and cannot be made artificially. Don't work for the sensation, work for the tone that produces such a sensation. At the same time the tone has a sensation of upward reflection, as though it arose at the back of

the voice box and separated there, passed up behind the jaws to the points where your fingers are resting, entering the mouth from above, as it were from a point just between the hard and soft palates, and becoming one sound in the mouth.

The uvula and part of the soft palate should be associated with the dark sound. The hard palate and part of the soft palate should be associated with the strident tone.

The Tongue Position

In making the strident sound the tongue should rest in the same position as for the dark sound. The dark tone never changes and is the basic sound which gives fullness, foundation, depth to the ultimate tone. Without it all voices are thin and unsubstantial. The nearer the singer gets to this the nearer he approaches the great vibrating base upon which the world is founded.

Remember that the dark tone never changes. It is the background, the canvas upon which the singer paints his infinite moods by means of different vowels, emotions, and the tone colors which are derived in numberless modifications from the strident tone. Another simile may bring the subject nearer to the reader student. Imagine the dark tone and all the sensations in different parts of the body as a kind of atmosphere or gas which requires to be set on fire by the electric spark of the strident tone. The dark tone is all necessary, but it is useless unless it is properly electrified by the strident tone.

A Practical Step

How shall we utilize what we have learned, so that the student may convince himself that herein lies the truth which, properly understood and sensibly applied, will lead to a means of improving his tone. If the foregoing has been carefully read and understood, the following exercise to get the tone which results from a combination of the dark and the strident is simple.

I. Stand erect as directed.
II. Open the mouth *without inhaling*.
III. Produce the dark tone ("u" as in hum).
IV. Close the mouth and allow the air to pass in and out of the nostrils for a few seconds.
V. Open the mouth without inhaling.
VI. Make the strident sound ("e" as in when).
VII. Close the mouth and let the air pass in and out of nostrils a few seconds.
VIII. Open the mouth without inhaling.
IX. Sing the vowel "Ah" as in *father* in such a manner that it is a combination of the dark tone and the strident tone.
X. Do this in such a way that all of the breathy disagreeable features of the dark tone disappear but its foundation features remain to give it fullness and roundness, while all of the disagreeable features of the strident tone disappear although its color-giving, light-giving, life-giving characteristics are retained to give the combination-tone richness and sweetness. A beautiful result is inevitable, if the principle is properly understood. I have tried this with many people who

have sung but little before in their lives and who were not conscious of having interesting voices. Without a long course of vocal lessons or anything of the sort they have been able to produce in a short time—a very few minutes—a tone that would be admired by any critic.

A Comfortable Pitch

It is to be assumed that the student will, in these experiments, take the pitch in his voice which is most comfortable. Having mastered the combination tone on "Ah" at any pitch, it will be easy to try other pitches and other vowels. "Ah" is the natural vowel, but having secured the "know how" through a correct production of "Ah" the same results may be attained with any other vowel produced in a similar way. "E" as in *see* has of course more of the strident quality, the high, bright quality and "OO" as in moon more of the dark, but even these extreme tones may be so placed that they become enriched through the employment of resonance of all those parts of the mouth, nose and body which may be brought naturally to reinforce them.

"Ping"

I have never met a singer who was not looking for "ping" or what is called brightness. Most voices are hopelessly dead, and therefore lack sweetness. The voices are filled with night—black hollow gloomy night or else they are as strident as the caterwauling of a Tom Cat. The happy mean between the extremes is the area in which the singer's greatest results are attained.

Think of your tone, always. The breath will then take care of itself. If the tone has a tremulo, or sounds stuffy or sounds weak, you have not apportioned the right amount of breath to it, but you are not going to gain this information by thinking of the breath but by thinking of the tone.

Let Your Own Ears Convince You

Now, that is all there is to it. I am not striving to found a method or anything of the sort; but I have seen students waste years on what is called "voice placing" and not come to anything like the same result that will come after the accomplishment of this simple matter. Try it out with your own voice. You will see in a short time what it will do. Your own ears will convince you, to say nothing of the ears of your friends. All I know is that after I discovered this, it was possible for me to employ it and make records with so small a percentage of discard that I have been surprised.

It remains for the intelligent teachers to apply such knowledge to a systematic vocal course of exercises, studies and songs, which will help the pupil to progress most rapidly. Don't think that I am pretending to tell all that there is to vocal culture in an hour. It is a great and important study upon which I have spent a lifetime. However, as I said before, I have nothing to sell and I am only too happy to give this information which has cost me so many hours of thought to crystallize.

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